SPECIAL DOUBLE ISSUE

THE NEW REPUBLIC

pril 26 & May 3, 1999

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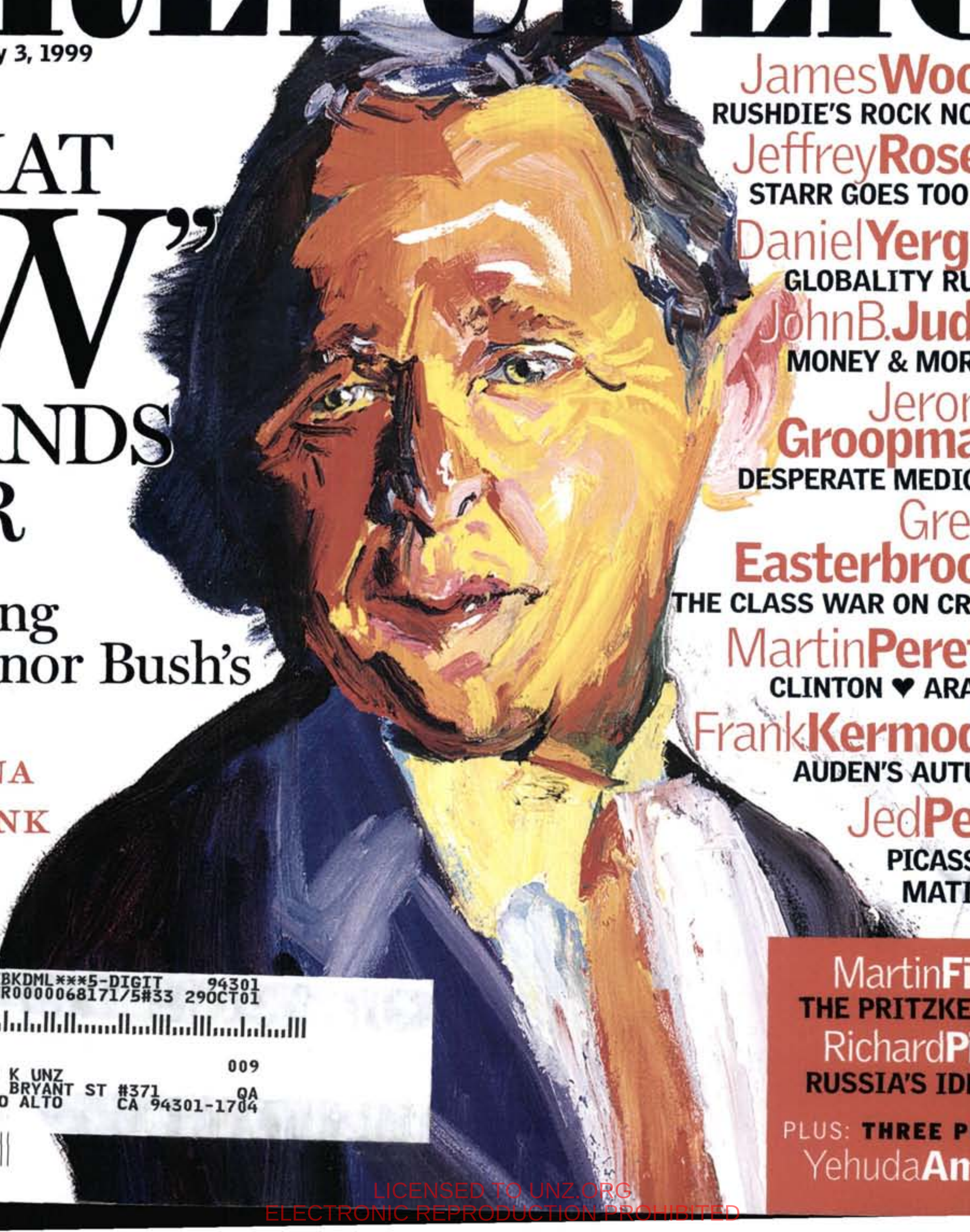

WHAT "W" STANDS FOR

Reading Governor Bush's Mind
by DANA MILBANK

James **Wood:**
RUSHDIE'S ROCK NOVEL
Jeffrey **Rosen:**
STARR GOES TOO FAR
Daniel **Yergin:**
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THE CLASS WAR ON CRIME
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THE PRITZKER HOAX
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RUSSIA'S IDENTITY
PLUS: **THREE POEMS BY**
Yehuda **Amichai**

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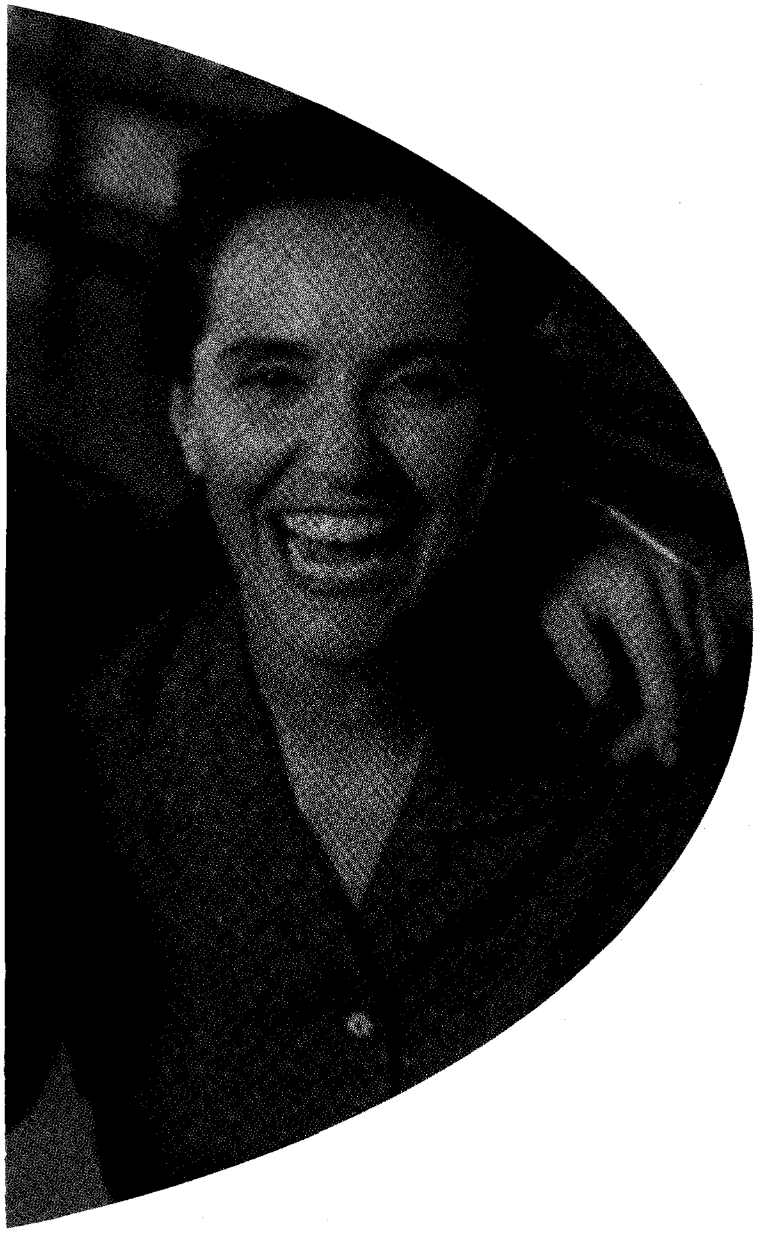

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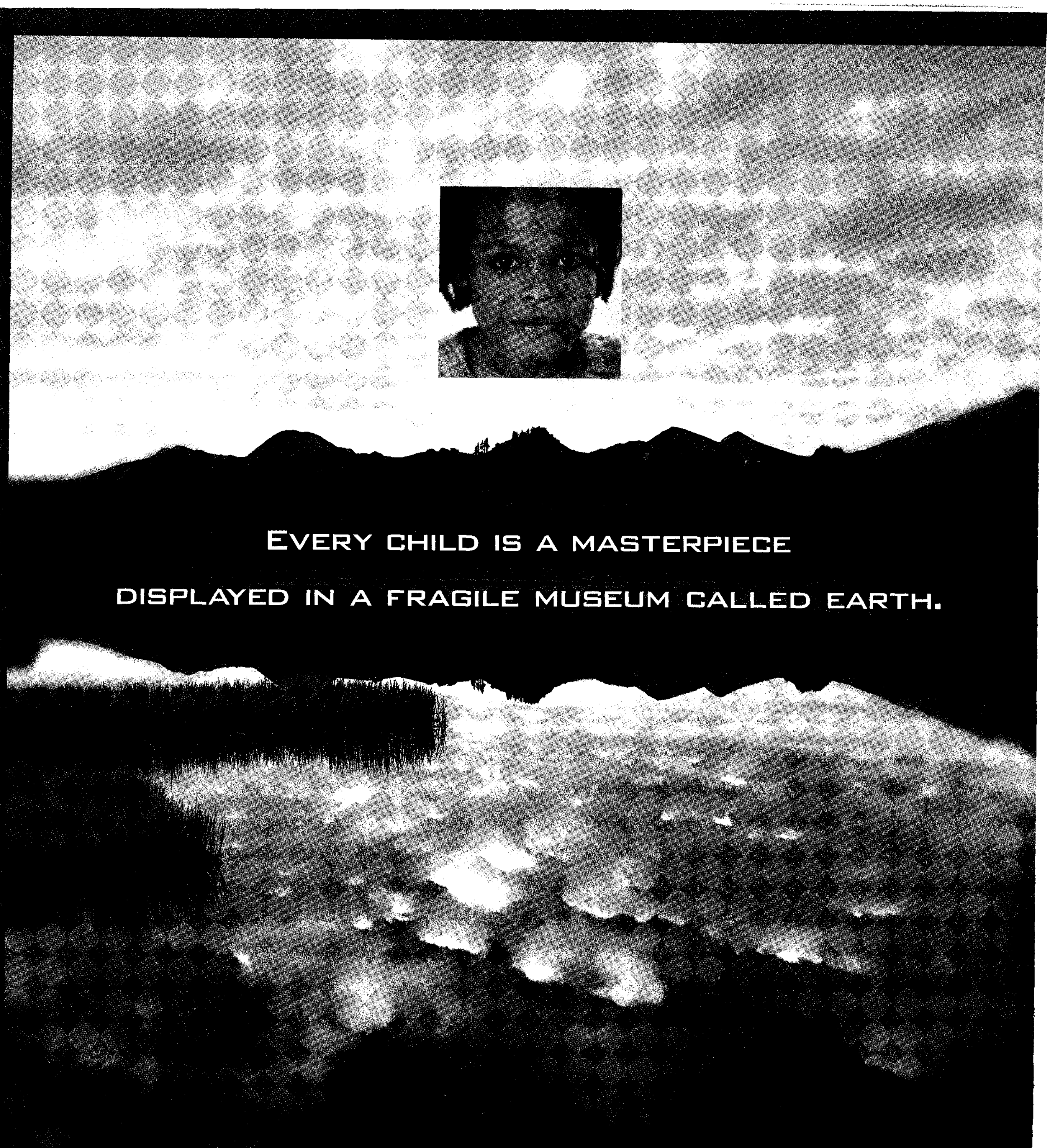
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THE NEW REPUBLIC
WASHINGTON, D.C.
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ISSUE 4,397 & 4,398

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On the Cover: Illustration by PHILIP BURKE *On the Web*: www.thenewrepublic.com

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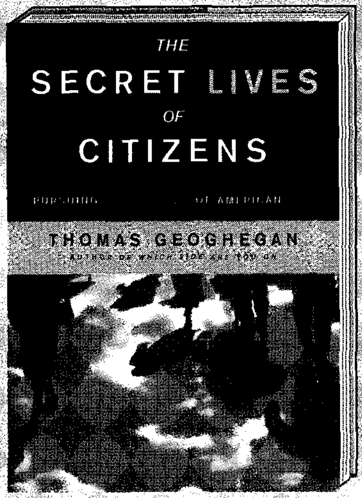
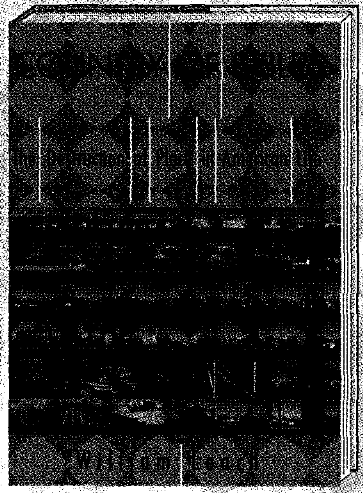


THE SECRET LIVES OF CITIZENS
Pursuing The Promise of American Life
Thomas Geoghegan
Author of *Which Side Are You On*

"Should be read by anyone who cares about the American landscape—before it's too late."
—Tony Horwitz, author of *Confederates in the Attic*



COUNTRY OF EXILES
The Destruction of Place in American Life
William Leach

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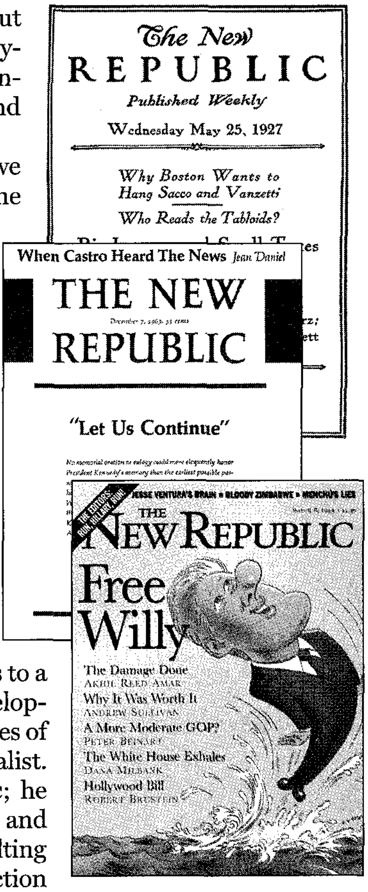
A note to our readers

THE NEW REPUBLIC last introduced a new design format in March 1989. We thought it dignified and beautiful, and it served us well. Readers, too, generally praised it, though there were a few who didn't. The most memorable expression of dissatisfaction came from a reader in Washington, D.C. "The new NEW REPUBLIC," he wrote us, "looks like a cross between a ransom note and the 1950 Encyclopedia Britannica."



The redesigned publication you hold in your hands is not exactly a response to that decade-old disgruntlement. But it does reflect the fact that ten years is a long time for anything to stay the same in contemporary culture. We're confident you'll find this new look as bright, as energetic—and as appropriate for today—as we do.

We didn't make this transformation lightly; indeed, we don't make *any* transformation lightly. Be assured that the change in appearance in no way signals a change in the kind of provocative, entertaining, and rigorous content you have come to expect from THE NEW REPUBLIC. You'll find a familiar cast of contributors, and all of your favorite departments, too—from Dana Milbank, Peter Beinart, David Grann, and Gregg Easterbrook to John B. Judis, James Wood, and Vint Lawrence; from TRB to White House Watch to Stanley Kauffmann on films. THE NEW REPUBLIC remains what it has always been: a journal dedicated both to the promotion of democratic ideals and to the expression of provocative ideas.

Still, a publication must engage its readers visually as well as mentally. And, with this design, we hope to make THE NEW REPUBLIC a more enjoyable reading experience for all of you. You will notice innovations large and small, from the addition of full-color art and photographs to a new logo and a new typeface that's easier to read. In developing this package, we were fortunate to have had the services of Roger Black, America's leading magazine redesign specialist. Roger understands the mission of THE NEW REPUBLIC; he crafted a design concordant with this magazine's history and high standards. We are grateful to him, as we are to consulting art director Jonathan Houston and our veteran production staff of Bruce Steinke and Henry Riggs, for all the hard technical work that made this redesign possible.

We hope and expect that the new look will be to your liking. We eagerly await your reactions, pro and con. THE NEW REPUBLIC is not just another publication but a community and a conversation to which reader participation remains as essential as ever.

Martin Peretz

Martin Peretz, Editor-in-Chief and Chairman

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A Journal of Politics and the Arts

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TO MOST NEWS FOLLOWERS, THESE ARE TYPICAL NORTH IDAHO RESIDENTS.

In truth, there are but a handful of racists and survivalists living in the Idaho Panhandle. But they get lots of news coverage. The other 99% of the population just doesn't make for such compelling reading.

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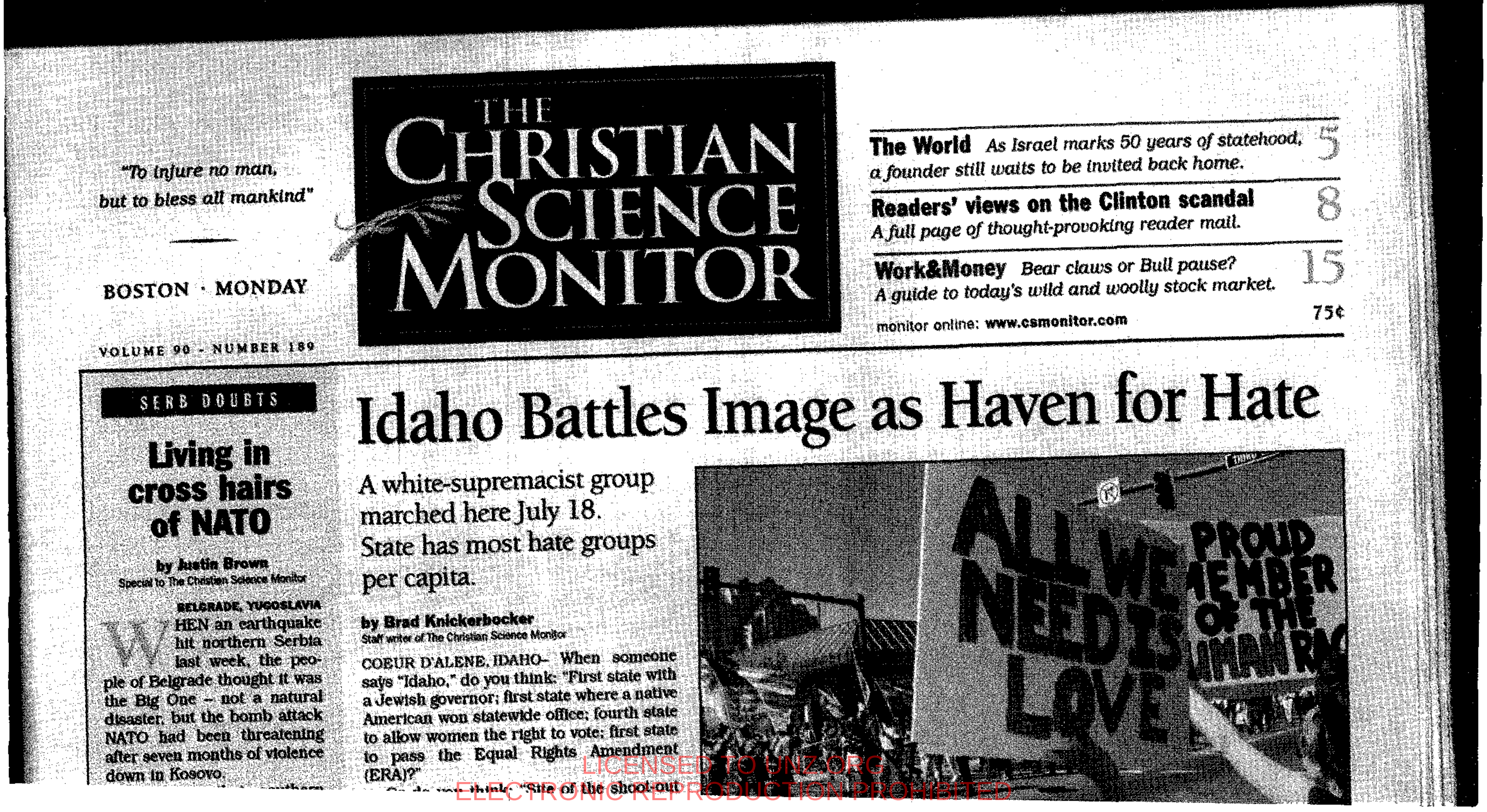

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VOLUME 90 - NUMBER 189

THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR

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SERB DOUBTS

Living in cross hairs of NATO

by Justin Brown
Special to The Christian Science Monitor

BELGRADE, YUGOSLAVIA

WHEN an earthquake hit northern Serbia last week, the people of Belgrade thought it was the Big One – not a natural disaster, but the bomb attack NATO had been threatening after seven months of violence down in Kosovo.

Idaho Battles Image as Haven for Hate

A white-supremacist group marched here July 18. State has most hate groups per capita.

by Brad Knickerbocker
Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

COEUR D'ALENE, IDAHO– When someone says "Idaho," do you think: "First state with a Jewish governor; first state where a native American won statewide office; fourth state to allow women the right to vote; first state to pass the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA)?"

Or do you think: "Site of the shoot-out

CORRESPONDENCE

Living for the city

To the editors:

Gregg Easterbrook's arguments in favor of suburban sprawl would be very persuasive if the playing field between cities and suburbs were level ("Suburban Myth," March 15). But it is not. For decades, government at all levels has favored suburban development at the expense of cities (and, more recently, of older suburbs). It does this by subsidizing much of the infrastructure, such as highways and sewers, that makes suburbia possible. And it does so in less direct ways like allowing homeowners to deduct the interest on their mortgages and taxing gasoline at a much lower rate than virtually every other industrialized nation.

Under these circumstances, is it any surprise that most Americans now choose to live in the suburbs? They are simply responding to signals from the market. Meanwhile, central cities and inner-ring suburbs are left with a stark choice: allow their services to deteriorate or raise taxes. And, since many businesses have also decamped for the newer suburbs, the tax burden falls increasingly on homeowners, giving them yet another reason to move out. And so the cycle continues.

JEFFREY BENDIX
Cleveland Heights, Ohio

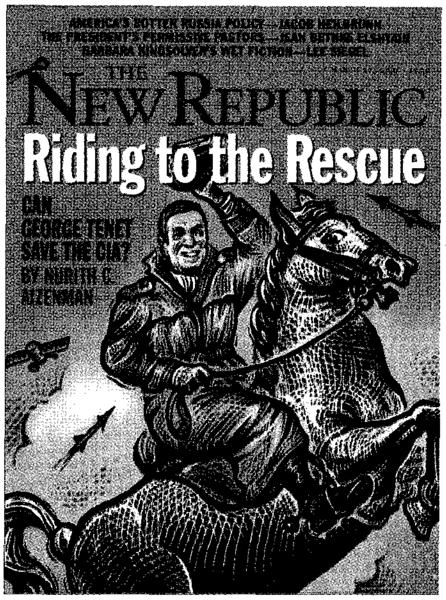
To the editors:

Gregg Easterbrook lists all the reasons for suburban expansion—to escape the corruption and mismanagement of urban governments, high crime rates, poor school systems, and crumbling urban infrastructures. It is hard to see why this convinces him that sprawl is inevitable; the solution is to make our cities livable.

Cities are historically magnets for population growth, and, in every modern city that has maintained or created pockets of relatively high-quality urban life, apartments and condominiums in such districts are fully utilized. Young people flock to cities because of economic and cultural opportunity and because of the vitality and energy of city life. Older people come to the city to avoid the isolation of suburban life and dependence on automobiles.

If we can develop and implement better strategies for rebuilding and strengthening our cities, we will reduce the momentum of sprawl without limiting individual choice. It is not too late to redeem our great cities, but it won't happen so long as we take it for granted that their problems are irremediable.

RUTH BENEDIKT
Brunswick, Maine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THE NEW REPUBLIC
Riding to the Rescue
CAN GEORGE TENET SAVE THE CIA? BY NURITH C. AIZENMAN

To the editors:

Gregg Easterbrook states that "[s]prawl is caused by affluence and population growth." This is not the case. Here in the Rust Belt, slow-growth metro areas like Detroit and Cleveland have experienced sprawl aplenty. In fact, sprawl is far more harmful in a Cleveland (where even inner suburbs are losing population to outer suburbs) than in a growing Sun Belt metro area where there is enough population growth to keep older areas vibrant.

Easterbrook claims that land-use planning has worked for Portland because "Portland has pretty much closed its doors to population growth." But Portland's population has grown by more than 20 percent since 1980 (as has the population of metro Portland). By contrast, my hometown of Buffalo and many other Rust Belt cities have been losing population for decades.

MICHAEL E. LEWYN
Buffalo, New York

To the editors:

Gregg Easterbrook argues that, despite increased urban and agricultural uses, "the United States is still two-thirds wild." But that depends on what one means by "wild." It is true that even the breathtaking recent expansion of Las Vegas and other metropolitan areas in the Southwest has consumed a small number of acres relative to the entire U.S. land mass. But the water required for agricultural and urban uses in the Southwest has sucked dry the Colorado and other once-mighty rivers. The millions of acres and surrounding desert are still "wild" on Easterbrook's terms but are, in reality, only a shadow of their former selves. Similar scenarios have played out in ways large and small all over this country, from the Columbia River Valley to the Everglades.

MICHAEL ALTERMAN
Somerville, Massachusetts

Crime and punishment

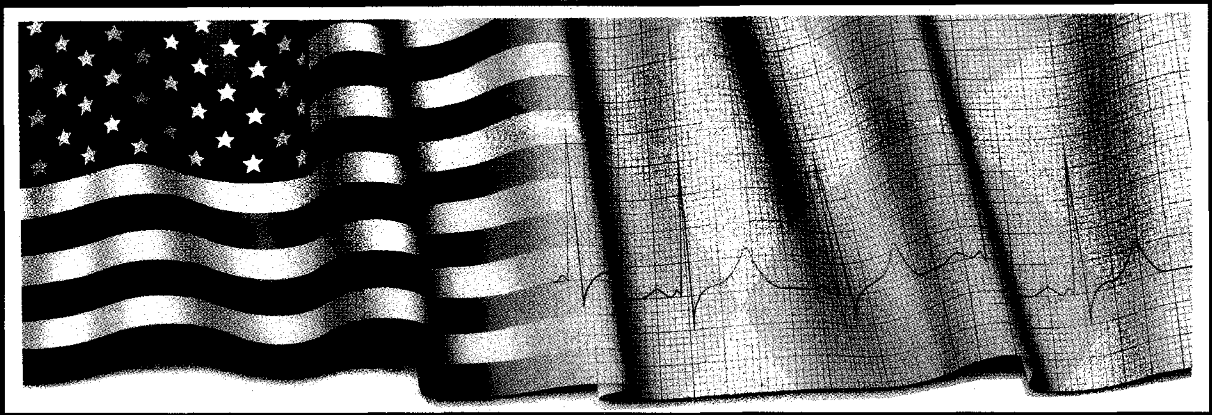
To the editors:

As a member of the Italian parliament, and as coordinator of the special senatorial committee against the death penalty, I was disappointed by both the tone and the reasoning of THE NEW REPUBLIC's polemic against the so-called Italian "hypocrisy" on the death penalty (Notebook, March 15).

The editorial states that our campaign against capital punishment is aimed exclusively at the United States. This is not so. After a lifetime spent in the Italian Communist Party, I have personally expressed to the Cuban authorities our disapproval of Castro's decision to increase the number of crimes that can lead to a death sentence; hence the committee's decision to send a delegation of observers to El Salvador, Guatemala, and Cuba, from which I just returned on April 2. Furthermore, all of our diplomatic work, not to mention our official papers, which THE NEW REPUBLIC should have consulted, firmly criticizes China, Burma, Afghanistan, Iran—the list could go on forever. That criticism has nothing to do with alliances, partnerships, or friendships. Simply put: We oppose judicial systems that allow legal assassinations in any form. We therefore oppose the future execution of John King, the racist extremist sentenced to death for the horrifying slaughter of James Byrd Jr., just as much as we opposed that of Joseph O'Dell, who might even have been innocent. Your argument of "why blame us when many others are guilty, too" is petty, and any debate based upon it will not lead to progress.

You do, however, go on to make the interesting point that public opinion is often more focused on American executions than on those taking place elsewhere. There might be some truth in this. But let's ask ourselves why. Is it old-fashioned anti-Americanism? Is it the debris of a certain European leftist subculture? Or does it have something to do with the fact that the United States is a country that is, and wants to be, considered the guiding light of civilization? I choose the latter explanation. True, an execution in China is no more justifiable than one in America. But America is the model of Western life, and it's when Washington calls that we all respond—

a decade that began with measured hopes ends in silence?



there are now 43,400,000 Americans without health insurance.

There are immediate steps we as a nation can take to reduce the number of Americans without health care coverage. These measures can make a difference.

More than 83% of uninsured Americans have jobs, a spouse or a parent who works. **The problem is greatest among the smallest businesses, where 35% of workers are uninsured.** America needs to provide greater incentives for employers to offer coverage for their now uninsured employees. This can happen.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association believes that by offering tax credits for low-income workers of small employers and full deductibility of insurance premiums for both self-employed individuals and for those without employer sponsored coverage, health insurance will be more accessible to more Americans.

At the same time, the government in Washington must resist the many public policy schemes that will increase the cost of health care. These policies can only result in more Americans without health insurance.

This is a situation where the government can foster solutions ... or aggravate an already grievous national problem.

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brothers in arms, literally—to ensure respect for human rights all over the world. With power comes responsibility.

As far as human rights are concerned, Italy is by no means an enlightening example to the world, either, as living conditions in our overpopulated jails daily demonstrate. I'm very much aware of this. But we do take very seriously—though on lay grounds—the Sixth Commandment, and have also recently abolished the death penalty for crimes committed during wartime. As a matter of fact, the Italian Senate has even voted for a bill (now waiting for the approval of the Congress) that abolishes life imprisonment. I understand that, to an American ear, it can sound very odd, and anyone is entitled to think it's outright wrong. But, if justice is meant not only to punish but also to improve society (and thus to help the readjustment of criminals), then our duty is to abolish capital punishment. Even if it takes a few hurt feelings to reach the objective.

ERSILIA SALVATO
Vice President of the Italian Senate
Rome, Italy

TO THE EDITORS:

You charge Pope John Paul II with "hypocrisy" because he "lectured" President Clinton about the death penalty without addressing the death sentences imposed on two Cubans who allegedly killed two Italian tourists. Had this indictment been filed elsewhere, it would be dismissed as mindless pope-bashing. But, coming from TNR, the accusation is bizarre.

For 20 years, the pope has praised the United States for its professed commitments to equality, democracy, and human dignity and has challenged us to live up to that commitment by protecting and cherishing the lives of the most vulnerable among us—the aged, the disabled, the condemned, and the unborn. It is here, in this country, the pope recognizes, that social justice and human rights are most valued—and often achieved—but it is here, too, that the pull of the "culture of death" is strongest. It is precisely because we have made such strides in political justice that we need to be reminded—or "lectured"—about the need to live up to our own values and to respect all human life.

Of course the same need exists in Cuba and everywhere else. But it is hardly "hypocrisy" for the pope, when visiting Cuba, to recognize political realities, to address what he and his predecessors have called "the signs of the times," and to challenge Castro and Cuba to open themselves to democratic values. You suggest snidely that John Paul's hope for a "new dawn of freedom" in Cuba is somehow disingenuous because, in the course of demanding freedom of conscience and democratic action for Cubans, he did not also warn them against following our example on capital punishment. This is not hypocrisy; this is prudence. TNR's uncharacteristically shallow charges of papal "hypocrisy," on the other hand, are mere posturing.

RICHARD W. GARNETT
Arlington, Virginia

THE EDITORS REPLY:

We never claimed that Italian opponents of the death penalty shouldn't criticize the United States; we merely noted the contrast between the obsessive quality of Italian public protests against the United States and the more muted ones toward other countries. Should the United States be held to a higher standard, as Senator Salvato suggests? Well, we'd find this easier to swallow from a politician who hadn't spent her lifetime in a party with a long history of claiming that, in fact, the United States does not represent a sincere expression of Western values, but maybe Americans should accept the senator's backhanded post-cold-war compliment. And, speaking of special responsibilities, when it comes to Cuba, Italy wields a unique power to effect change on that island. Texas is unlikely to alter its sentencing policies in deference to the symbolic politics of Sicily's mayors; Cuba, however, depends for its economic survival on Italian tourists and investors, and, if Prime Minister Massimo D'Alema issued a general call for tourists to avoid Cuba until Castro revoked the death penalty, Italy's words would have a real impact. As for Richard W. Garnett's concerns about pope-bashing, let us remind him that the Vatican maintains an office in Washington, D.C., which is widely known for assisting protests of death penalty convictions in the United States. Such services are not similarly promoted in Cuba. Does Garnett mean to say that the pope's "prudence" and recognition of "political realities" require the Holy See to keep quiet about the brutality of this hemisphere's last dictatorship?

Muse you can use

TO THE EDITORS:

Thank you for Lee Siegel's excellent review of *The Poisonwood Bible* ("Sweet and Low," March 22). One point worth adding is that Barbara Kingsolver herself gives the game away in a *New York Times Magazine* profile published last October. Her description there of her own personal literary muse is remarkable: "If I were to write a nonfiction book about the brief blossoming and destruction of the independence of the Congo, and what the CIA had to do with it, then probably all 85 people who are interested in the subject would read it. Instead, I can write a novel that's ostensibly about family and culture and an exotic locale. And it's entertaining, I hope." Ah, that burning, unquenchable, universal desire of the artist to create!

RUSSELL PITTMAN
Takoma Park, Maryland

TO THE EDITORS:

Since Lee Siegel finds Barbara Kingsolver's writing so objectionable, I suggest that you spare both him and your readers the ordeal of his reviewing any of her future work. Her books (at least the ones he cited) are fiction, and his criticism of her portrayal of real events and persons as inaccurate was—to put it kindly—over the top. I'm not aware that there are standards of accuracy for fiction-writing. Perhaps he should stick to nonfiction. He seems to have an ax to grind. I don't understand why TNR would publish this scathing and ridiculously lengthy review of a novel.

KAY SNOWFLEET
Palatine, Illinois

Money for nothing

TO THE EDITORS:

Jacob Heilbrunn presents intelligent, well-researched, and cogently argued criticism of American foreign policy with regard to Russia ("Just Say Nyet," March 22). But he too quickly dismisses serious questions of the possible consequences of Russian dissolution—"civil war and the spread of loose nukes"—and asks instead of our Russian aid programs, "[I]sn't it time to ask what America is getting in return?"

Heilbrunn is correct in his dismal assessment of America's success in reviving Russia's economy and might be right to criticize the U.S.'s willingness to tolerate Russia's attempts at asserting its former power. But he should not forget the stabilizing results of America's present policy and progress toward real hope for a democratic Russian ally.

RICHARD M. RE
New Orleans, Louisiana

Spread the wealth

TO THE EDITORS:

Charles Lane's "radical" proposal for Social Security isn't nearly radical enough ("Tax Americana," March 22). Take my example. My wife and I are a fairly typical, prosperous, 57-year-old couple contemplating retirement in a few years. We will start collecting Social Security as early as possible. With substantial income from my IRA, Keogh, 401(k), and other investments, we will be able to maintain our income after retirement, particularly when Social Security and Medicare are factored in. Meanwhile, our Social Security pension will be supported out of tax revenue collected from younger and/or poorer people, including our children, who need the money more than we do. By not paying

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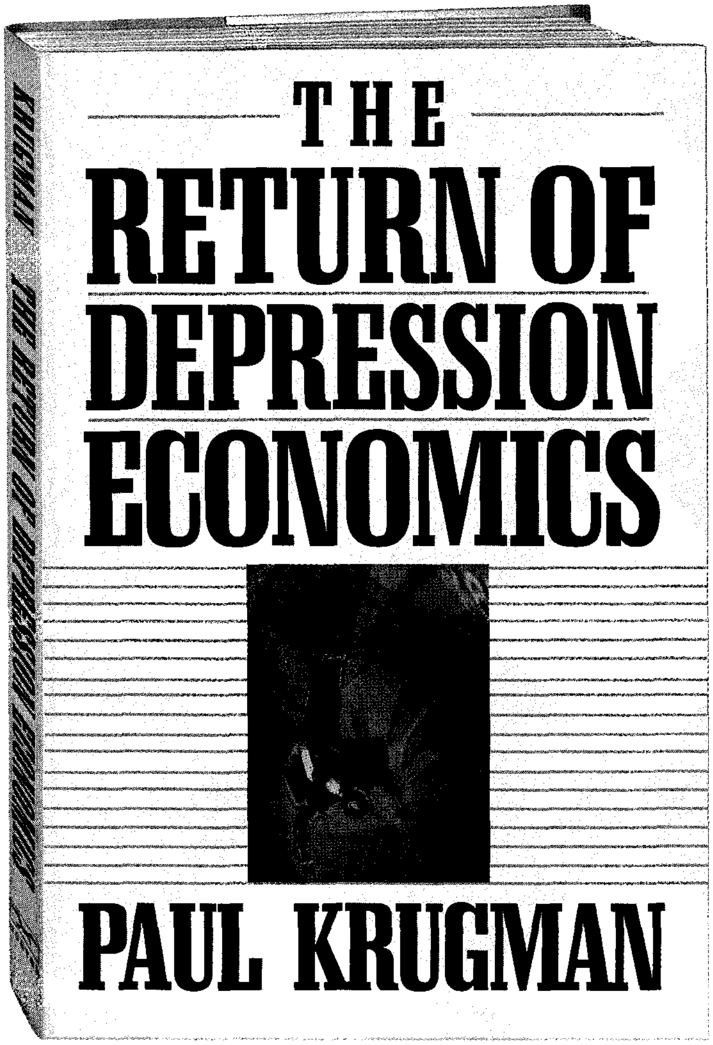

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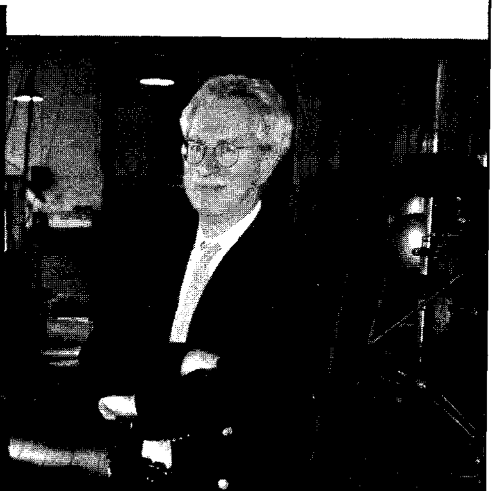

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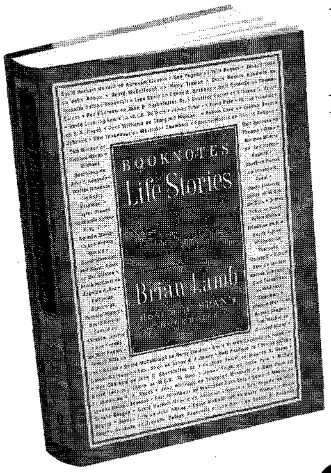

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TIMES BOOKS

FICA or Medicare tax, we get a tax break just when we no longer need it.

Is that fair? Our income will not drop substantially and may even increase. Why should our taxes fall just because we are retired? All people, young or old, with the same income, "earned" or "unearned," should pay the same tax. FICA and Medicare taxes should be abolished entirely. Tax rates should be increased to make up for the loss of revenue. The cap on "earned" income subject to the payroll tax should likewise be abolished, and Social Security benefits should be taxed as ordinary income. Such a proposal would provide tax relief to younger and poorer workers and restore substantial equity to the system.

ROBERT ENNIS
Irvine, Pennsylvania

Just testing

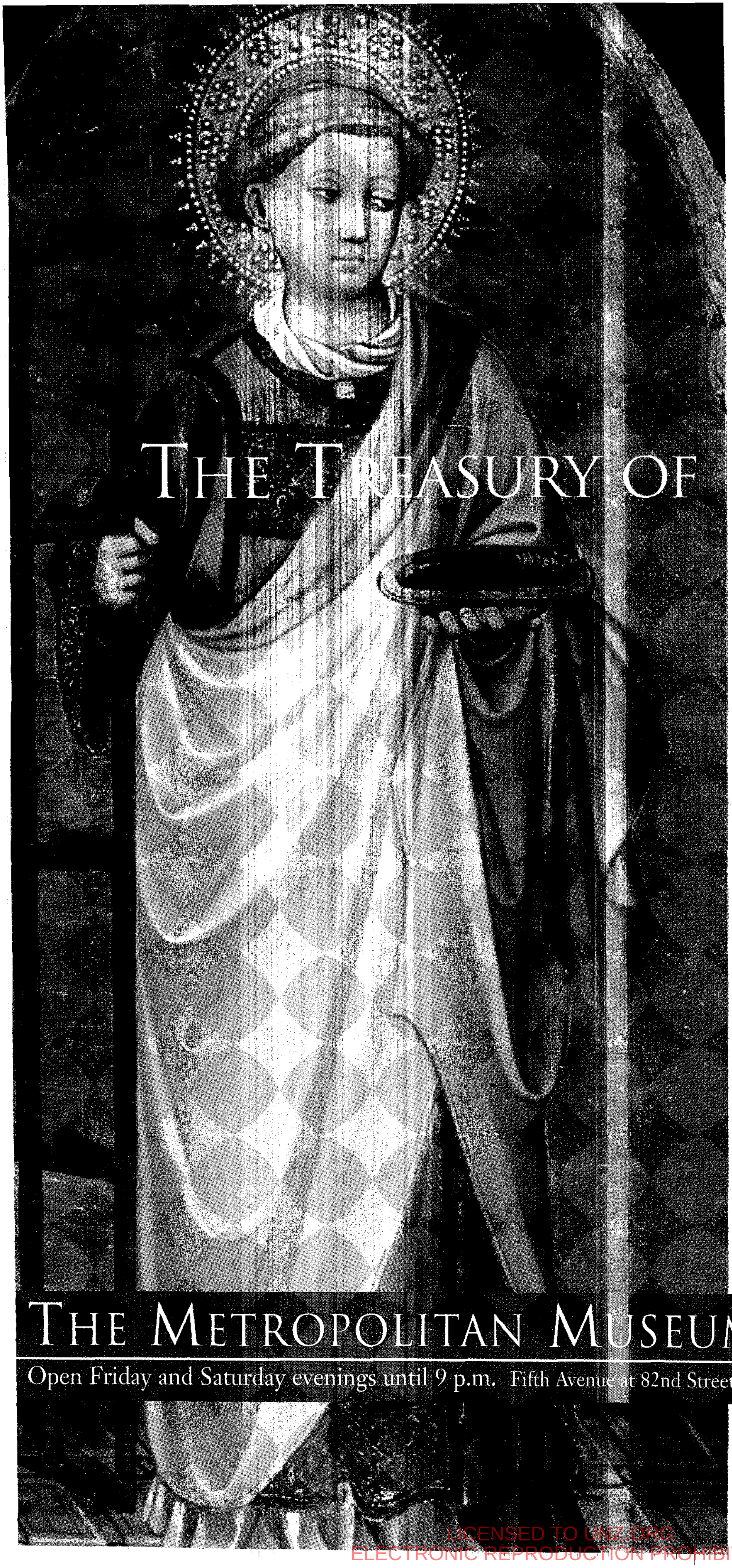
TO THE EDITORS:

I would urge all male readers over 50 to ignore any suggestion in Shannon Brownlee's article "Unkind Cuts" that they should not bother having a Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) test to detect prostate cancer because there might be dire consequences from a positive result (March 22). In fact, men over 50 should insist upon such a test. If a man receives a positive PSA, he can then decide whether he wishes to proceed with further diagnosis and treatment. He and his urologist can discuss the treatment options and attempt to make a rational decision. Would Brownlee argue against mammograms for women simply because there might be serious consequences if cancer were found? To suggest that men should avoid "unnecessary harm" by avoiding the test is strange advice indeed.

LEON E. SHIELLS
Carmel Valley, California

SHANNON BROWNLEE REPLIES:

Leon E. Shiells's reaction to my story is not surprising, but it is based on two widely held false assumptions. First, it is very difficult for many doctors and patients to ignore a positive test. Doctors fear that counseling a man to do nothing could lead to a malpractice suit if he went on to develop cancer. Most patients can't walk away from a positive test because cancer is so scary. The second fallacy is that all cancers are alike. They are not. The vast majority of breast cancers, if left unchecked, would progress to fatal disease. Many men with prostate cancer, by contrast, would probably live to a ripe old age even without treatment. Suggesting that the PSA test and mammography are equivalent is just plain wrong. There is strong evidence that mammography saves lives in postmenopausal women. The same cannot yet be said for the PSA test in men. ■



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Gherardo Starnina, *Saint Lawrence* (detail), ca. 1405–10, Museo-Tesoro della Basilica di San Francesco, Assisi, Perkins Collection

TRB

FROM WASHINGTON

Oversight

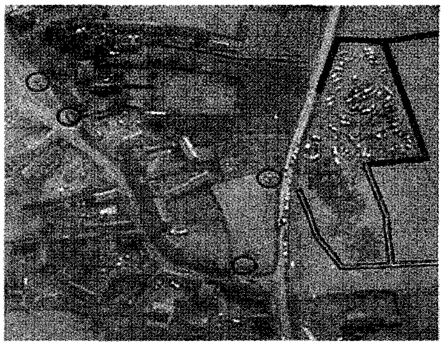
This is a picture of ethnic cleansing in progress. The red-circled objects are Serbian armored vehicles, surrounding the Kosovo Albanian village of Glodane. The elongated gray smudge in the lower-right area of the shot is a crowd of people—the population of the village, ousted from their homes and herded into a field by Serbian troops. You can also make out a flow of civilian vehicles, presumably full of deportees, proceeding from the field south on the road to Albania.

It's breathtaking to contemplate these images, probably taken by an American U-2 spy plane over Kosovo at the height of the Serbian rampage through the province. It's even more chilling to realize that NATO is in possession of additional pictures, taken shortly after this one, which show the field completely empty and Glodane in flames. (Those photos have only been described to journalists, not released to the public, apparently to prevent the Serbs from making deductions about U-2 flight patterns.)

At last, "national technical means," the intelligence community's euphemistic name for its vast array of sophisticated spy planes, satellites, and remote listening devices, may be coming into its own as a tool for investigating and, eventually, punishing war crimes and other massive violations of human rights around the world. During the cold war, these supersecret eyes and ears in the sky were devoted mainly to monitoring military movements in the Soviet Union, especially possible violations of arms control agreements. But in the post-cold-war world the very same technology that enabled, say, a KH-11 spy satellite to spot a Soviet bomb as small as a soccer ball can be used to find and photograph a pile of massacred bodies. New Predator pilotless aircraft can actually produce videotape of ongoing military activity—including, presumably, assaults on civilians.

Four years ago, the United States released a few aerial photographs of mass graves near the massacre site in Srebrenica, where Bosnian Serb forces under General Ratko Mladic killed thousands of Muslim men in July 1995. But that was done on an ad hoc basis. Kosovo represents the first time President Clinton has formally "tasked" the intelligence community to use national technical means to document war crimes, according to a story by Vernon Loeb in the April 6 *Washington Post*. State Department spokesman Jamie Rubin has announced that information gathered this way could later be supplied to the international war crimes tribunal in The Hague. Clearly, the administration is responding to criticism it received back in 1995, which charged that it had withheld key war crimes evidence from the public and the tribunal because of excessive concerns for the secrecy of U.S. intelligence-gathering methods.

Adapting national technical means to the inherently political task of pursuing and prosecuting war criminals poses real challenges. Satellites and spy planes cannot see everything. According to the *Post*, even the KH-11 satellite, the most powerful one the United States has in orbit, can make only two ten- or 15-minute passes over Kosovo each day. During that time, it can probably take about 75 pictures of preselected targets no more than a couple of kilometers wide. There will be large areas where atrocities go undetected. As for spy planes, the Serbs can gradually figure out their schedules so as to avoid doing anything too barbaric while they're overhead. Furthermore, aerial photos and intercepted telecommunications traffic are time-consuming and expensive to examine and interpret.



Glodane village, Kosovo: armored vehicles circled in red; deportees within blue lines.

Moreover, the Clinton administration's decision to use national technical means in what could become an international law enforcement effort represents a further departure from the traditional norms of the intelligence community, which have generally been opposed to missions with such obvious potential for politicization.

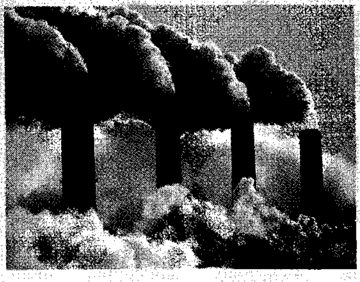
To be sure, the intelligence agencies have less of a right to resist the war-crimes-fighting mission after so eagerly rushing into the war on drugs, which is also a quasi-judicial mission fraught with political and diplomatic issues. But intelligence traditionalists can be expected to continue resisting the new mission. And, to a certain extent, openly conceding that U.S. intelligence is a material witness to crimes against humanity does raise genuine dilemmas for the agencies.

Still, though the intelligence community can always be accused of sitting on the information, ultimately it's up to political decision-makers how to use it. Now that the Clinton administration has opted to use national technical means for human rights purposes in Kosovo, there's no logical stopping point: Why not Tibet, North Korea, Iraq, and Indonesia? In principle, we have the capability to gather information about atrocities in all these places—and we probably have. But it's up to the policymakers to decide what to do with the data.

Jamie Rubin sent a warning of future prosecution to nine specifically identified Yugoslav field commanders. The United States still hesitates, however, to brand Milosevic a war criminal despite what U.S. intelligence already knows about his past culpability for war crimes in Bosnia, let alone what it knows about his activities in Kosovo. A senior NATO official recently told me that Milosevic personally supervises the operations of Yugoslavia's military, including its current operations in Kosovo. Nothing is going on there without his orders or advance knowledge. Since Milosevic, wary of creating a paper trail, rarely puts his orders in writing, we can presume that NATO knows this from intercepted phone calls and radio traffic. Milosevic's direct culpability can be further deduced from the fact that he recently replaced his entire military high command when the officers seemed to balk at his plans for dealing with Kosovo. Shortly after Srebrenica, Milosevic claimed to the senior NATO official that he had instructed Mladic not to massacre the men there. If that's true, then Mladic, in contrast to the officers who hesitated to crush Kosovo, received no punishment for his more murderous act of insubordination.

The United States has kept its Milosevic war crimes file secret to preserve it as a bargaining chip, both in the 1995 Dayton negotiations and in dealings with him over Kosovo. Yet Milosevic has clearly decided to call America's bluff. Either he believes that we don't really have the goods on him or, more likely, that we would much prefer to keep him in place as a negotiating partner rather than seriously attempt to bring him to trial. Based on the half-hearted conduct of the NATO war against him so far, the Serbian leader may yet win his gamble.

Charles Lane



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WEST COAST DISPATCH

Board Game

THE LATEST LESSON of California politics is that Republican millionaires spend their money smarter than Democratic ones do. Al Checchi, the former Northwest Airlines titan, poured $40 million down a rathole in a vanity run for governor last year. Now, wealthy Los Angeles Mayor Richard Riordan is poised to shake up L.A.'s failing school district with a mere $270,000. That was Riordan's personal contribution to the $2 million his Coalition for Kids has raised to bankroll a reform slate of four candidates in the bellwether school-board election on April 13.

Modeled on a widely hailed overthrow of Sacramento's moribund board two years ago, the coalition's campaign scrambles all the rules of traditionally union-dominated school races. Riordan's slate of three challengers and one incumbent will outspend opponents by as much as four to one and could emerge with a working majority on the seven-member board. If it works, the campaign could prompt other reformers to make these backwater races a community-based alternative to the kind of state-directed school takeovers seen in cities like Chicago and Detroit.

Riordan's commitment to education is deep. The former venture capitalist has given $25 million to school projects over the years, much of it in Los Angeles. He's sprinkled computer labs across the city and funded model after-school programs that the state itself is now expanding. But such efforts could do only so much to help the nation's second-largest school system. Just consider its current litany of woes. Two-thirds of L.A. third-graders can't read at grade level. The dropout rate is more than twice the state average. SAT scores are nearly 13 percent below the state average and have fallen in the past decade. School libraries have five books per pupil, versus a national average of 20. One in four L.A. teachers lacks proper credentials. Next fall, when the district ends the practice of "social promotion," up to 60 percent of affected kids are in danger of flunking.

Moreover, despite soaring enrollment, just two new high schools have been built since 1971. And the big new high school project currently under way—Belmont, west of downtown—is already a classic white elephant: it sits atop an old oil field. With cost estimates topping $200 million, the most expensive high school in state, if not human, history now drowns in toxic cleanup fights, lavish cost overruns, and an orgy of finger-pointing. Belmont, which may never open, is a metaphor for chronic mismanagement in Los Angeles; the school district spends nine percent more per pupil than the rest of California, but just 60 cents of every dollar reaches the classroom.

Yet, the school board, which Riordan says is stocked with "wannabe politicians who are in it for their first power base," lacks any sense of urgency. Three of four school-board incumbents, when asked by the *Los Angeles Times* whether the system was in crisis, said "no."

Like many U.S. mayors, Riordan has little clout in the classroom, thanks to school districts' nineteenth-century origin as separate taxing entities, plus Horace Mann's well-meaning (if naïve) push to keep schools out of municipal politics. But, as urban woes have mounted, so has the need to act. And, in Los Angeles, the kind of authority Illinois gave Chicago Mayor Richard Daley seems politically impractical. Unlike Chicago, L.A.'s "unified" school district is bigger than the city itself; neighboring mayors won't let Riordan annex their schools.

So Riordan, unable to reform the school board from above, is trying to fix it from below. There's certainly a lot to fix. As a study by L.A.'s blue-ribbon Committee on Effective School Governance found, well-run boards (like Philadelphia's or Chicago's) meet monthly to review a handful of priorities tied to raising student achievement. L.A.'s board, however, meets every week, often from one o'clock in the afternoon until midnight. Members spend hours second-guessing principal assignments, helping parents get their kids' schedules changed, and poring over expenses worth less than one-thousandth of one percent of a $6.5 billion budget. Not even cafeteria menus or bathrooms escape scrutiny. One educator watched in amazement a few years ago as board members corralled the superintendent at an awards luncheon and dictated an afternoon "to do" list of constituent errands "as if he was a personal assistant to each one of them."

Despite this dysfunction, board members usually scare off challengers by raising as much as $150,000 from the system's teachers, principals, contractors, and service workers. But not this year. With the help of Riordan's $2 million—most of which came from a $1,000-per-plate reception he gave with his wife, tapping the same business pals active in the mayor's other causes, like charter reform—two of his candidates may each spend $600,000 or more, astonishing sums for a school race. Bill Carrick, a heavyweight consultant who ran the mayor's own races, is handling Riordan's candidates. He's blanketing CNN, ESPN, and other cable channels with school-board ads for the first time.

The teachers' union actually backs two of Riordan's four candidates and cheers his aims. Still, "it's a little frightening," says union president Day Higuchi, "that a little oligarchy can orchestrate" these changes. Potential conflicts abound. Eli Broad, for example, a big investor in the NFL franchise the city hopes to lure, has given $250,000 to Riordan's coalition at a time when the NFL deal hinges on millions of pending city subsidies.

A bigger concern is whether Riordan's candidates offer a coherent agenda. The mayor says he wants schools governed by a big-picture board of directors, but the one incumbent he's backing, David Tokovsky, is a legendary meddler. Meanwhile, another incumbent, Jeff Horton, has staked out positions seemingly in line with Riordan's, like tying teacher pay to student results—a stand that helped cost him the teachers' endorsement. Yet Riordan opposes him with Caprice Young, a 33-year-old former city hall aide who's considered thoughtful but utterly inexperienced in the schools.

Still, whatever its flaws, Riordan's effort could put a national spotlight on urban school boards as catalysts for change. Every big-city school shakeup in recent years has required either legislation from above or a court order. School-board races—with their relatively low costs and, in Los Angeles, paltry 15 percent turnout—are fertile ground for determined reformers with cash in hand. The Christian Coalition proved school boards could be an effective battleground for cultural conservatives, especially in suburbs and small towns in the South and Midwest. Riordan's revolt—if successful—would adapt the same strategy to secular aims.

In Los Angeles, at least, time may be running out. Without results soon, everything from the Valley secession movement to vouchers is sure to get a stronger hearing. Says *Los Angeles Times* editorial page editor Janet Clayton: "This is really the last best chance for the school district."

MATTHEW MILLER

MATTHEW MILLER, a syndicated columnist, is an L.A.-based senior fellow at the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania.

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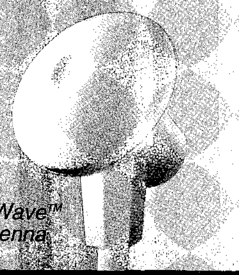

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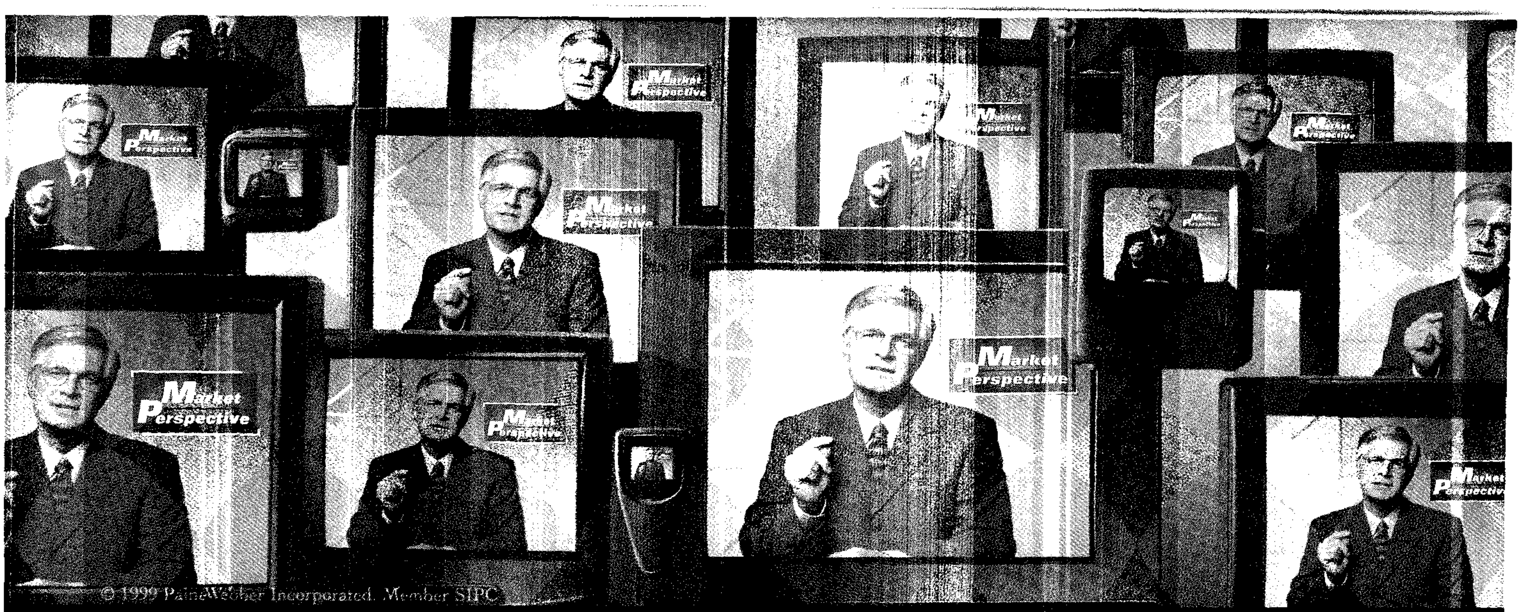

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On Target

AS HIGH-TECH munitions continue to rain down on Serbia and as NATO records its first bad miss—errant bombs smashing into the mining town of Aleksinac—we hear more, both from Belgrade television and from the genuinely concerned, about the vast destruction Western high-tech weapons are inflicting upon the Serbian people. In this case, conventional wisdom is the reverse of reality. Smart weapons have radically reduced the danger to civilians from aerial bombardment. Not only are these weapons more accurate, they are also less destructive than the bombs of the past.

During the Gulf war, a vast Western air armada bombed Iraq for six weeks, yet the civilian death toll was less than 1,000. A thousand civilians dead is sorrowful in every way but tiny compared to what happened in Tokyo on March 9, 1945, when an estimated 85,000 people died from a single American air strike, or in Dresden in February 1945, when two nights of conventional bombing killed 35,000. Low-tech World War II bombers such as the B-24 delivered 10,000 pounds of explosives per flight. The Navy cruise missiles that hit military structures in Belgrade last week carried one-tenth that amount of explosives each, enough blast to destroy their targets but not so much that bystanders would suffer. Today all the conventional cruise missiles in the U.S. arsenal combined have an explosive power equivalent to only about 15 percent of the Hiroshima bomb, which itself, bad as it was, left parts of Hiroshima standing. The U.S. could fire every one of the 2,100 conventional cruise missiles in its arsenal at Serbia, and most parts of the country's cities would be unscathed. After all, if smart bombs were as devastating as people assume, the cities of Iraq would not still be there.

The destructiveness of smart bombs is declining because the part of them devoted to fuel and electronics keeps getting bigger, while the part that explodes gets smaller. Fighter-borne smart bombs such as the AGM-65, the Air Force's main laser-guided munition, commonly mount a 300-pound warhead, smaller than the standard "dumb" bomb of World War II. A 300-pound explosive is plenty terrifying but, if it misses its target, should destroy at most a few houses. Meanwhile, the bombers themselves decline in number. Today the entire U.S. bomber fleet consists of 190 aircraft, compared with about 20,000 at the end of World War II. Adjusting for the greater speed, payload, and range of modern aircraft, all current U.S. bombers combined can deliver about one-twentieth the conventional punch of the fleet of 1945. Without using nuclear weapons, today's Air Force would probably not be physically capable of the wide-area destruction it imposed on European cities in World War II.

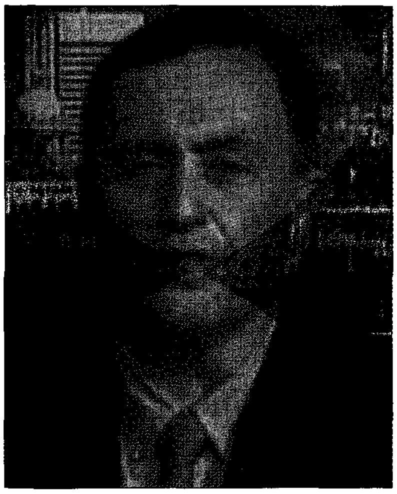
In Aleksinac, NATO's apparent target was an artillery brigade headquarters. A total of three stray bombs did the following damage: eleven people known killed, 30 injured, eleven houses demolished, many vehicles damaged, broken glass everywhere, and damage to an ice cream factory and an animal feed plant. From the standpoint of the victims, all deaths are equally tragic, but the relatively contained level of devastation from this sad mistake is indicative of how technology can make war less menacing to civilians. In World War II, an attack on a city like Aleksinac would have consisted of a full squadron of heavy bombers dropping tens of thousands of pounds of TNT all over the town in hopes that some fraction of the bombs would hit the artillery headquarters. Today such a target is typically attacked by a handful of much smaller warheads.

As Americans contemplate the possibility of a ground war, it's important to note that this analysis also applies to some high-tech land-war weapons. America's main battle tank, the M-1A2 Abrams, fires a nonexplosive main round containing a dense metal that shatters the armor of other tanks at a high velocity. Outdated tanks of the sort that the Yugoslav Army employs can cause general destruction by shelling cities. The Abrams gun is intended mainly to destroy other tanks. When its anti-tank round misses, there's a big bang but not much else.

As the price of smart munitions keeps rising, the U.S. weapons inventory keeps shrinking, further reducing general destructiveness. Between the Belgrade attack and the brief bombardment of Iraq last December, the Air Force is already down to fewer than 100 air-launched cruise missiles. If the Serbian conflict continues for long, the service may run out of a similar smart bomb, the AGM-130, altogether. There's an obvious lesson here for the annual budget squabble among the White House, Congress, and Pentagon planners: don't spend so much on glamour acquisitions, like the F-22 fighter, that there's not enough left for the munitions existing planes carry. The larger lesson concerns the reality of high-tech war, as opposed to TV hype. Whether or not smart weapons make aerial bombardment a formula for victory, they do make it less horrible. ■

NOTEBOOK

BELGRADE BRENT: Watching the Balkan war on CNN has been a disorienting experience. Christiane Amanpour, on the Kosovo-Albania border, forthrightly reports that the flow of human desperation is a "war crime." Amanpour also insists on calling the expelled Kosovar Albanians "deportees" rather than refugees. But then there is Brent Sadler in Belgrade. As best we can tell, most of what he's doing is a sympathetic voice-over to footage fed to him by Slobodan Milosevic's state television network. Like Peter Arnett in Baghdad before him, Sadler supplies Ted Turner's audience with quasi-news heavily influenced by the embattled tyrant's point of view. On April 3, for instance, Sadler treated us to Belgrade TV's scenes of the Yugoslav Interior Ministry building in flames after a raid by American cruise missiles. Sadler solemnly informed us that this attack was carried out "precariously close" to a university hospital, then he cut to Belgrade TV's tape of babies being evacuated from the maternity ward. The real story, of course, was the astonishing accuracy of the missile raid on this patently legitimate military target. Obviously, U.S. forces knew that the hospital was nearby and thus chose the most precise weapon in their arsenal so as to avoid civilian casualties. But this truth would have contradicted Belgrade's propaganda about the savagery of the NATO bombardment—so Sadler didn't mention it, nattering on instead about the "courage" of the Belgrade populace. "Shame, shame, shame on you," an angry Serb told us through Sadler's camera. We might say the same for Sadler.



Bombing

TURNCOAT: Lucky for Milosevic, American TV news also suffers from amnesia. During the bombing of Belgrade, Milosevic's most eloquent English-speaking apologist has been the bearded Serbian Deputy Prime Minister Vuk Draskovic. "No one has that genocide strategy," he told CNN. "We need Albanians in our state." "We are victims of combined crimes of NATO and Albanian terrorists," he said on Belgrade TV. Yet, not so long ago, Draskovic was singing a different tune. Milosevic's state, Draskovic said in 1996, was a "despotic, tyrannical, one-sided, one-legged, one-eyed regime" that "cannot have any friend left in the world." He ridiculed Clinton administration efforts to talk peace with Milosevic. "America is wrong if it thinks that the one who destroyed Bosnia can now be the only guarantor of its peace," he said. "No one should trust this guy, especially not America." Under Milosevic, Draskovic was arrested twice for opposition activity. In 1996, he was one of three opposition figures who led massive protests in Belgrade after Milosevic annulled opposition electoral victories. The Clinton administration, sensing the emergence of a possible democratic alternative, stood up for Draskovic and his colleagues. They even got an audience with Secretary of State Madeleine Albright in April 1997, after which Milosevic eventually agreed to include Draskovic in his government as Yugoslav deputy prime minister. And it is in that co-opted role that Draskovic has reentered America's living rooms, defending the man whom he used to call the "butcher of the Balkans." No one should trust this guy, either.

MORAL EQUIVALENCE INTERNATIONAL: Now, more than ever, we need an honest, independent enumerator and evaluator of human rights violations around the world. For many years, Amnesty International credibly performed that role. But now signs are multiplying that this group has lost its moral compass. The latest is a March 22 statement issued by Pierre Sané, Amnesty's secretary-general. The ostensible purpose of Sané's press release is to challenge member nations of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights to clean up their own acts. "Victims in places like Algeria, Cambodia, Turkey, and the Great Lakes Region of Africa have been let down by governments' failure to match human rights rhetoric with adequate support for action," Sané writes. So far, so good. But then there's this: "Amnesty International will highlight these four examples together with the USA—where a persistent and widespread pattern of human rights violations appears to disproportionally affect people of racial or ethnic minority backgrounds.... The United States of America, despite its claims to international leadership in the field of human rights and its many institutions to protect individual civil liberties, is failing to deliver the fundamental promise of rights for all." We don't doubt the U.S. criminal justice system has its flaws, and miscarriages of justice happen most frequently to the most marginal members of our society (see "Run-on Sentencing," by Gregg Easterbrook, page 57). We also have no doubt that, in this media-saturated, litigious democracy, serious violations of human rights—murder or torture by police—are far less likely to go undetected and unpunished than anywhere else in the world. For Amnesty to pretend that this isn't so—to pretend that human rights in America should be dealt with in the same breath as those in Cambodia or Burundi—is more than just inaccurate and offensive. It's actually a little bit crazy.

A NEW ADDITION: We are very pleased to welcome our new architecture critic, Martin Filler, whose first piece, a skeptical look at the Pritzker Prize, appears this week. Filler's criticism has appeared in *The New York Times*, *The New York Review of Books*, *House Beautiful*, and *Design Quarterly*, among many other publications. He is the author of *Frank Gehry: Vitra Design Museum* and *Art + Architecture + Landscape: The Clos Pegase Design Competition* and is a guest curator of the Brooklyn Museum of Art's coming exhibition "Vital Forms: American Art and Design in the Atomic Age, 1940–1960." We congratulate our readers on the shrewd and learned writing they are about to enjoy. ■

Spin control, Serbian style.

Must-bleed TV

By ROBERT GLADREEPER

BELGRADE

EVERY SO OFTEN, Milena pauses in her tirade to say, "I used to be a normal person before this." Then she continues: "Rambouillet was an insult to our intelligence, totally unacceptable. Maybe before we used to dislike Milosevic, but now we can't think about that anymore. I say let him do his job. When this is all over, when we have won, we can think about whether we want him or someone else. But now we just have to be together, to stand behind him. I feel so helpless; I want to do something, be useful in the army."

Their man in Belgrade.

Milena is a 25-year-old, thoroughly Westernized Belgrade intellectual who is also studying for a Ph.D. in genetics. She was once, indeed, a normal person. Now she is one of the millions of Serbs whom NATO will need to consider as it ponders ground-troop deployment: civilians eager to pick up a weapon and protect their land to the death. True, some Serbs are still avoiding military service because they fear that, for the moment, it would merely entail sitting in barracks waiting to get hit by NATO bombs. But, once a ground war started, the dynamic would quickly change.

NATO's bombing was bound to produce a patriotic surge, of course. But Slobodan Milosevic's sophisticated propaganda machine has made it far more intense. Belgrade media began spreading war fever back in October, when NATO bombing was still just a threat. A new law on the media went into effect, establishing criminal penalties for publishing stories deemed "anti-government" or "anti-patriotic." Not long after, the government began its latest attack on independent media, closing down Radio Index in Belgrade and, later, at least two other radio stations.

It was then that all television channels started showing a new music video featuring Serbian military planes streaking across the sky, Serbian paratroopers crossing a river, a Serbian soldier loading a canon, a Serbian soldier on leave dancing with his Serbian girlfriend in a beautiful Serbian ballroom, the Serbian girlfriend of the Serbian soldier looking wistful, a Serbian mountain standing tall, a Serbian tree looking green, and a gorgeous Serbian sunset. "We love you, our homeland. With your name in our hearts your army is marching," go the lyrics accompanying the image. These days, the video runs at least two dozen times a day, including before and during the newscasts on state television.

"Everything was prepared in advance," says Zarana Papic, a Belgrade anthropologist and media analyst. On the first night of the bombings, state TV broadcast an epic film about the fabled 1389 battle of Kosovo Polje that the Serbs gloriously lost to the Ottoman Turks. Then, over the next three or four days, it fed viewers a steady, round-the-clock diet of World War II films, refreshing the Serbs' link with their Partisan heritage. At the same time, the media introduced one of the most important clichés of the current crisis: the phrase "NATO's criminal aggression on the sovereign state of Serbia." The word "unprovoked" often precedes "aggression," and "our land" sometimes replaces "the sovereign state of Serbia." But the key, according to Papic, is the word "criminal," which invariably makes Serbs think of World War II and the Croats, who committed atrocities against the Serbs while fighting alongside the Germans.

Next it was time to discredit and belittle the enemy. So, according to Papic, starting on March 27, three days after the bombing began, official media—and by this time all media were more or less official, since the government had introduced military censorship and was in the process of shutting down all independent radio—began to verbally mug the enemy. Tony Blair became "the little man with complexes"; Bill Clinton, "a sax player and a killer." As a group, they were referred to as "the sexually frustrated Clinton, his lesbian wife, Hillary, who is best friends with the wife of Tony Blair, the head of a homosexual government where the only non-queer is the well-known alcoholic Robin Cook." The television film selection changed. Serbs saw *The Godfather* and *Wag the Dog*—three times.

Slobodan Milosevic had laid the groundwork for this radicalization of official language in his March 24 television address, when he announced his rejection of the Rambouillet accord. He referred to the proposal's authors as "those scum who know no culture, no history." Painting NATO countries as barbarians "really plays to the Serbs' narcissism," explains Papic. The message is that "we are the only people who are not accepting the new world order. At the same time, we are Christians, so no one can suspect us of being like those Muslim fundamentalists."

A people whose cause is just cannot lose. Or, if they are

ROBERT GLADREEPER is a pseudonym for a regular contributor to THE NEW REPUBLIC who is currently in Belgrade.

Serbs, they can celebrate for centuries even if they do lose. But, just to reassure the population, Serbian television stresses both Serbian military strength and the purported fact that life in Serbia goes on as usual. An average newscast goes something like this: first, the announcement that Milosevic has ordered that some top brass in the Third Army stationed in Kosovo, or some sergeants in the air force, are to be awarded medals. The officers or soldiers are then tediously enumerated, though their acts of valor are not. Then come the atrocities—the ones committed by the "criminal NATO."

If a factory is bombed, the news will most likely show a map of Yugoslavia with a red dot marking the town where the factory is and then a hospital or maternity ward in a building close to the explosion. The anchor or the reporter might talk of "unheard-of brutality" or "the worst aggression since World War II" and then recall the last time the United States and Britain bombed Belgrade, in 1944. (No matter that the city was occupied by the Germans at the time.) There will be no word of civilian causalities, and, while the news will report that the members of the Yugoslav soccer team have donated blood, it will not mention that the blood was necessary to treat the wounded. Next will come footage of what used to be the old town in Pristina, now a skeleton charred by the "criminal NATO aggression upon the sovereign state of Serbia." The fact that Serb forces set fire to buildings and homes in Pristina, naturally, escapes notice.

Now comes a little red tractor moving through a big brown field. Getting down from the tractor reluctantly, the meaty-faced driver says, "Yes, we have plenty of fuel and plenty of manure. The planting season is well under way." Never mind that, at the beginning of the bombing campaign, the authorities essentially banned the sale of gasoline for civilian needs and that, now that NATO has been targeting oil refineries and other fuel-related objects, Serbia is sinking into a full-fledged petrol crisis.

A reporter might mention the phrase "ethnic cleansing" but only in reference to the Albanians' supposed treatment of Serbs in Kosovo. If the news mentions "refugees," it will be Albanian families who, by some miracle, managed to get to the Belgrade railroad station. Of course, they might also just be Albanian shopkeepers from Belgrade whose stores have already been demolished by vandals and who fear further violence. But, whoever they are, they tell the microphones that it is the Kosovo Liberation Army they are fleeing. Or, to be more precise, "the terrorist organization that, before its demise, called itself the Kosovo Liberation Army."

THE MEDIA BARRAGE is designed to minimize the public's fear that any harm will befall them personally, while maximizing their patriotic outrage. The same dual purpose is achieved by the daily peace concerts in Belgrade. These concerts feature not only rock music but also poetry readings that showcase the Serbs' cultural superiority. Some participants held up signs pointing out that Serbs were Christians long before Columbus brought Christianity to America. This reach for cultural sophistication, required of the self-appointed protectors of European civilization, is also evident in the bombing-related advertising campaign. At its heart is the "target" sign now seen all over the world as well as on the lapels of television anchors and in the hastily designed new logo for the radio station Studio B.

The target sign has been showing up on billboards all over town. Each makes interesting use of the symbol. "STOP THE BOMBS," says one, which has targets in place of the two "O"s. Another adds: "LISTEN TO YOUR CONSCIENCE" and illustrates this appeal with an old-fashioned tape recorder with two targets in place of the cassette heads. And overlooking the main square is a gigantic copy of the Gandhi ad from Apple's "think different" campaign, except that Gandhi has a target on his tunic. And so does almost everyone else in Belgrade and elsewhere in Serbia. So much for thinking differently. ■

The misreading of Milosevic.

Who Knew?

By SAMANTHA POWER

AS I WAITED in a television green room last week, a fellow guest introduced himself to me as a veterinarian. I assumed that he had been summoned to discuss the effects of NATO's air strikes on Kosovar livestock. Though it turned out that he was to appear on a segment on pet care, my unblinking reaction tells you a lot about the level of pundit-mania that has gripped American TV, radio, and op-ed pages since the launching of Operation Allied Force. The smart thing to say on TV or in the press is, of course, that NATO's strategy is a disaster and that the Clinton administration should have foreseen the bloody mass deportation now under way. But where were we self-styled experts when we were needed—*before* NATO's bombing unleashed a killing and cleansing spree of Balkan proportions?

The answer is: nowhere. In the weeks before March 24, reporters, human rights monitors, congressmen, and analysts examined just about every issue *except* the fate of the ethnic Albanians on whose ostensible behalf NATO would intervene. Incredibly, of the 120 Kosovo-related questions asked by reporters at State Department briefings in the three days preceding the bombing, only one related to the fate of the Kosovar Albanians, and it focused on those Albanians who might cross into neighboring countries. Of the 19 op-eds and editorials in *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times* in the two weeks preceding the bombing, the possibility of a bloody crackdown inside Kosovo was mentioned in just three one-line references. Our thoughts were elsewhere. Kosovo-watchers grilled the administration about the possible damage to U.S.-Russian relations, the utility of air power, the importance of concrete political objectives, the failure to

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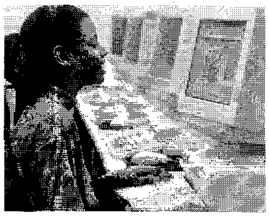
SAMANTHA POWER reported on the Balkans from 1993 to 1996 and is now the director of the Human Rights Initiative at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government.

What's a *computer lab* doing in an inner-city housing project? A lot.



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Not what the pundits had in mind.

adequately consult Congress, the durability of NATO unity, the number and variety of NATO targets, the fate of American personnel in Serbia, the (non)deployment of U.S. ground forces, the possibility that the Serbs would wipe out the Kosovo Liberation Army, the danger that NATO would embolden the KLA, the extent of Serbian anti-air defenses, the absence of an exit strategy, the futility of negotiations, the absence of U.N. Security Council authorization, the future legal status of Kosovo, the future legal status of Slobodan Milosevic, the strength of democrats in Montenegro, and the likelihood that Serbs would "lash out" at other Balkan countries.

Nobody stated the obvious: some 40,000 Serb Army, police, and paramilitary troops backed by 300 tanks occupied Kosovo. More forces were on the way. A ragtag KLA force controlled scattered hilltops but possessed no heavy weapons. Some 1.8 million Albanians lived in Kosovo. Their fate—and, specifically, the fate of Albanian men of fighting age—was thus in the hands of Slobodan Milosevic. And no international verifiers or reporters would be on hand to deter or bear witness. In hindsight, it seems, it shouldn't have been hard for us to read the writing on the wall.

Don't get me wrong. The Clinton administration deserves much of the criticism it is now receiving, inasmuch as it possessed classified evidence of Milosevic's intentions. According to *The New York Times*, one advance intelligence report warned that the Serbs planned to cleanse Kosovo of Albanians within a week. Yet U.S. planners both ignored such predictions (as evidenced by international unreadiness to deal with the refugee crisis) and now gallingly deny that NATO sorties have helped unleash unprecedented Serb sordidness. But the rest of us ignored signals available in the public domain. Lt. Col. Gen. Nebojsa Pavkovic, commander of Yugoslavia's Third Army, was quoted in *The Washington Post* on March 20 as saying: "If attacked from outside, Yugoslavia will deal with the remaining terrorists in Kosovo"—"terrorist" being official parlance for all male Albanians above the age of 16. Thus, as we slam the official decision-making process, we might also try to account for the staggering lack of foresight all around.

Like U.S. policymakers, the punditocracy misapplied the lessons of Bosnia. Because Milosevic signed the Dayton peace agreement soon after NATO aggressively bombed the Bosnian Serbs in September 1995, it became fashionable to point out that he was a rational actor whose primary interest was not Greater Serbia but Greater Slobo. On this theory, NATO bombing would again give Milosevic the political cover he needed—this time, to sign the Rambouillet accord granting Kosovo autonomy. In fact, owing to the visceral nationalism that Kosovo inspires among Serbs in Serbia, he has thus far concluded that he would suffer more politically by losing Kosovo than by absorbing a NATO bombardment.

In their rush to dub him opportunistic, many also neglected the fact that Milosevic is a creature of his own political culture, a key characteristic of which is *inat*, a Serbo-Croatian word that means some combination of spite, indignation, and chutzpah that is best conveyed by the following popular joke. A Serb and an Albanian live side by side. Each owns one cow. One day, lightning kills the Serb's cow. An angel appears before the Serb and offers him a wish to make up for his loss. His reply: "I want God to kill that Albanian's cow." If NATO was going to punish Serbia, then, by God, Milosevic was going to make sure the Albanians paid, too. And the most significant difference between Bosnia 1995 and Kosovo

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1999 (never mentioned in the pre-bombing chatter) is that Milosevic *could* make the Albanians pay because 1.8 million of them were trapped under his dominion—a far cry from Bosnia in August 1995, when virtually no Croats or Muslims were left in Serb-held territory to be killed or expelled. Had we looked further back to the NATO mini-bombings of 1994 and 1995, we would have seen the Serbs retaliating against U.N. peacekeepers whom the Serbs forced to lie face down on Serb airfields or chained to bridges. It wasn't until these potential hostages had departed Serb territory that NATO could bomb without fear of reprisal. But Bosnia was ethnically tidy in a way that Kosovo is—or, at least, was—not.

If *inat* is an utterly foreign concept to American policymakers and journalists alike, so, more generally, is the concept of radical evil. In the American imagination, serial killers are supposed to be bug-eyed like Charles Manson or leave their bloody paw prints at the scene of the crime like Zeljko "Arkan" Raznatovic. They simply do not look—or talk—like Slobodan Milosevic, a man who has dined out on his charms and maintained a deceptive distance from his crime scenes. Yet it is now abundantly clear that this civilized costume cloaks a man utterly unconstrained by scruple.

But what of those human rights activists and journalists who, like myself, had already witnessed Milosevic's evil firsthand? What's our excuse? First, we saw how violent Serb rule had already become, and we heard the Kosovo Albanian leadership urging bombing. One prominent Albanian often wore a T-shirt adorned with a logo that captured the Albanian mood: a Nike swoosh and the words, "NATO AIR—JUST DO IT." A March 24 *New York Times* editorial, rare for raising the possibility of Serb retaliation, followed by noting that "that is the risk the Albanians are willing to take."

Second, though we knew NATO's desire to avoid casualties would preclude the use of ground troops, we did not anticipate the extent to which it would constrain NATO's use of air power. Rather than embarking on low-flying missions to target the Serb forces terrorizing Albanians in Kosovo, NATO spent most of the first week of the strikes hammering the Serbs' anti-aircraft defenses deep within Serbia proper.

And, third, after eight years, we had become fed up with watching the United States, in Zbigniew Brzezinski's words, "threatening loudly but waving a wet noodle." In our desperation to see something done, however, we settled too quickly for *anything*. Up against those who challenged the strategic necessity of any engagement, we closed ranks and lobbied earnestly for the only interventionist option on the table. Let's face it: Raising the danger to Albanians as an objection to NATO bombing would not have brought about the deployment of U.S. ground troops; it would have provided a rationale for doing nothing at all.

At this point, we'll never know what might have been if we had sounded the alarms. But only when Albanian men are unearthed from mass graves or smoldering rubble in Kosovo will all of us—journalists, activists, "analysts," and government officials alike—comprehend the human costs of our collective lack of vision. ■

Saving NATO, losing Kosovo.

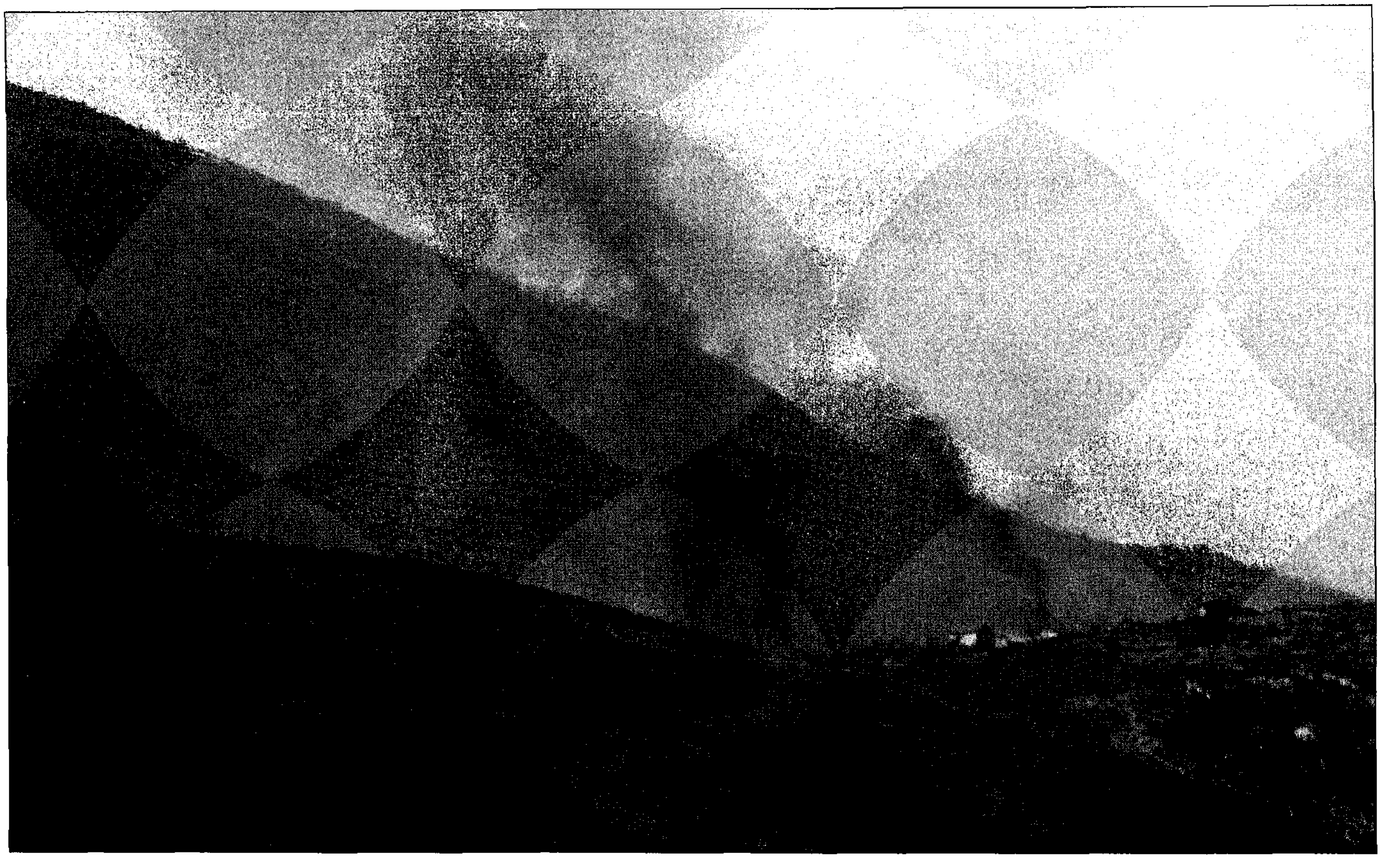
Force Without Force

By Leon Wieseltier

Last week was the week in which the United States fought a war with Serbia and lost. As of this dejected hour, there are almost half a million refugees around Kosovo's borders, and the magnitude of the slaughter inside Kosovo is unknown, though it is certainly what Senator Nickles would have to call "a very significant massacre"; but NATO is delighted to announce that it has destroyed a second bridge in Novi Sad, and that two significant buildings in Belgrade are in flames. No, wait, the clouds have cleared. An appliance factory in Cacak is also a ruin.

The war aims of the Western alliance continue to be formulated in a language that remains bizarrely unaffected by the agony on the ground. These words that officially defy reality are designed to discourage any discussion of American ground troops, who might get hurt. And so at the Pentagon they speak only of "punishing" and "degrading" Serbia and its army. On March 31, President Clinton articulated "our stated objective" in this way: "To raise the price of aggression to an unacceptably high level so that we can get back to talking peace and security, or to substantially undermine the capacity of the Serbian government to wage war." But the Serbs are not waging a war, exactly. They are expelling people and exterminating people. The only way to punish and to degrade a savage in a ski mask who breaks down the doors of houses in the night and orders the women and the children to leave and shoots the men dead is to capture him or to kill him. Yet the president seeks not to stop aggression; he seeks to raise its price. Hasn't he heard that the Field of Blackbirds is priceless? Somebody should brief the president about unreason. For his own fondest aim for Operation Allied Force is to "get back" to "talking." What a distraction from dialogue evil is!

In Bosnia, a genocide took place in the face of American inaction. In Kosovo, a genocide is taking place in the face of American action. Truly, our capacity for horror is being taxed. NATO's war against Slobodan Milosevic and Slobodan Milosevic's war against Kosovo are being fought alongside each other, in a sickening disconnection. NATO is promising that its war against Milosevic will continue because its "credibility" is at stake; but credibility for NATO is not mercy for Kosovo. If Milosevic finally has his way with Kosovo and NATO finally has its way with Milosevic, then NATO will be credible, except morally. Operation Allied Force originated in a moral impulse, in an impatience with an injustice, and for this it deserves to be supported, or else the United States is just another great power; but it is no wonder that NATO's


Clearing Kosovo.

campaign is increasingly defined more in the terms of realism and less in the terms of idealism, because the struggle against ethnic cleansing has been thwarted in the Balkans for the second time in the annals of the Clinton administration. The work of idealism, once again, has been reduced to relief and rescue, to the aftermath of catastrophe. Where we should have rushed bullets we are now rushing blankets.

We have been witnessing a good fight badly fought. The means have not been commensurate with the ends. Operation Allied Force is Operation Insufficient Allied Force; and the crippling of Serbia from the skies will not alter this. How did this happen? A few early observations are possible.

The Velocity of Evil. In Washington it is said that the fault with Operation Allied Force was not its purpose but its "implementation." This is true, but it is too simple. For the implementation is a reflection of the extent to which the purpose was improperly comprehended. The failure in the planning of this operation was owed in part to a poor understanding of genocide as a military problem.

The preempting of genocide, or the ending of it, has certain peculiarities as a military objective. The use of force against it cannot be satisfied with punishment, because punishment is always tardy. It is right to deny the aggressors the fruits of what they have done; but they have done what they have done. Punishment is just a way of restoring morality to tragedy. Also, it makes no sense to speak of escalation in a war against genocide. Such a war is not a war of attrition, if its aim is to prevent the death and the disappearance of a people. A war against genocide must be fought with a fury, because a fury is what it is fighting.

For the purpose of stopping genocide, the use of force is not a last resort; it is a first resort. The alacrity of the response matters as much as the intensity of the response. In Washington it is said that ground troops must not be "hastily deployed," but a hasty deployment is the only kind of deployment that is appropriate, because the crime, too, is hasty. The president is pleading that we "stay the course," and NATO is promising weeks and weeks of bombing. But Kosovo will soon be still. Less than half the Kosovar population is left in Kosovo. In Belgrade, the stillness of Kosovo will mean victory.

American culture and American politics are drenched in the memory of Auschwitz, but some of the fundamental features of ethnic cleansing, its swiftness and its single-mindedness, appear to have escaped American planners. They have not yet learned to think operationally about the resistance to genocide. Instead they consult and they calibrate. And they boast about the cohesion of the alliance. The good news is that Brussels is holding. The bad news is that Pristina is not.

In and Out. The infirmity of will that has characterized Operation Allied Force is best captured in the concept that has become the centerpiece of all discussion of the use of American force. I refer to the circumscription of American action known as "exit strategy." This dogmatic deadline is really a political concept, not a strategic concept; it allows politicians and planners to beautify their pandering to the polls with the high discourse of strategy. Essentially, "exit strategy" exchanges the maneuverability of soldiers for the maneuverability of politicians. It is a concept borrowed from the world of commerce, which is not a world of sacrifices for

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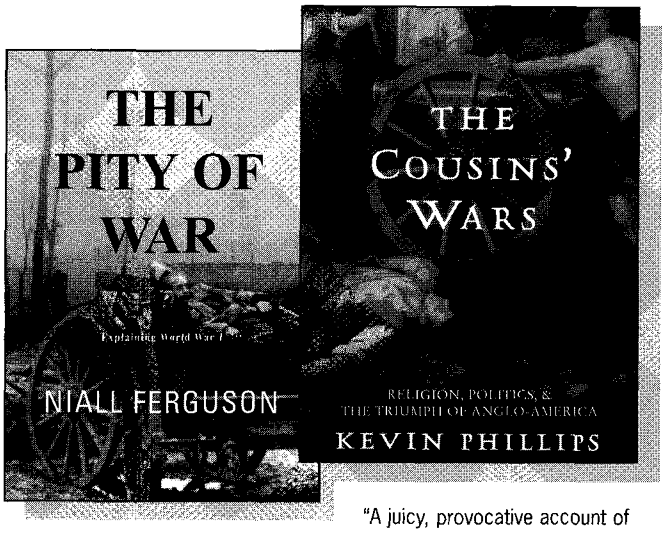
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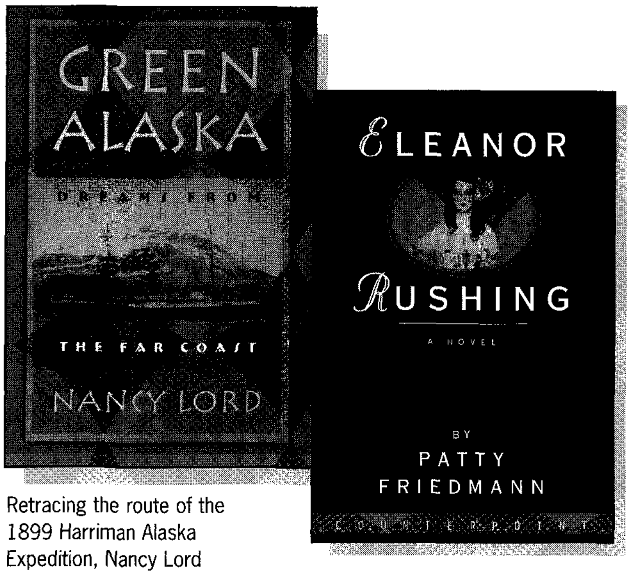
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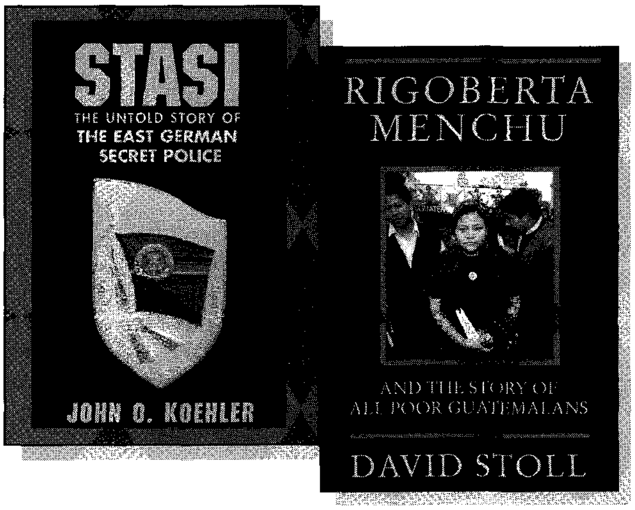
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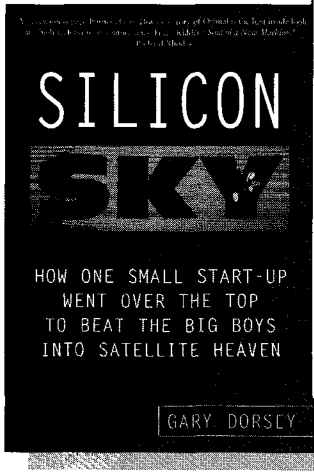
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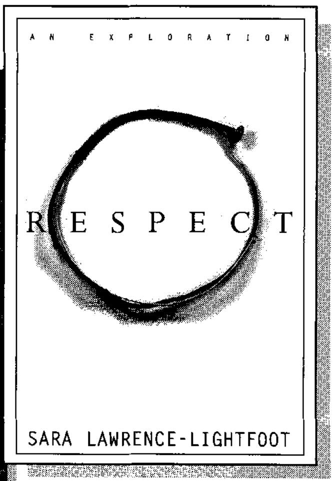
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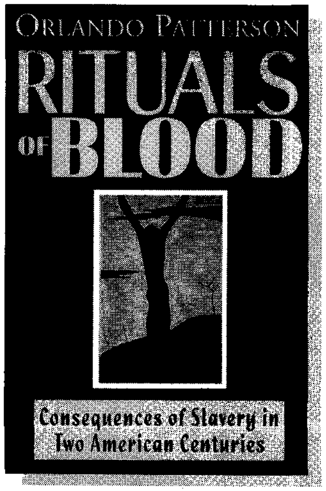
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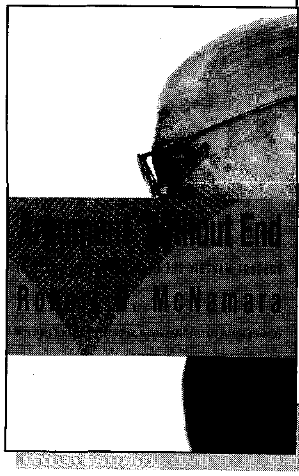
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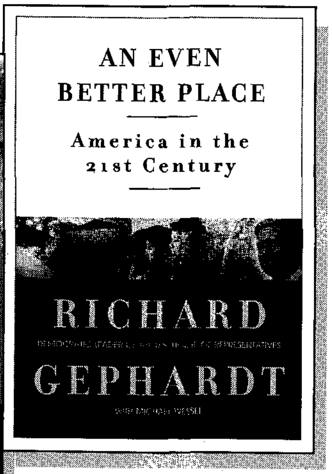
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"Exit strategy" became canonical in 1993, in the wake of the clash in Somalia in which 18 American soldiers were killed. President Clinton's response to the incident was not to suggest that the soldiers in Mogadishu had not died in vain, since hundreds of thousands of Somalis were saved from starvation by the American deployment. "Americans are basically isolationist," he explained to George Stephanopoulos. "They understand at a basic gut level Henry Kissinger's vital-interest argument. Right now the average American doesn't see our national interest threatened to the point where we should sacrifice one American life." Since it is an axiom of Clintonism that the president and the average American must at all times be the same, the president brusquely announced on October 7, 1993, that American troops would withdraw from Somalia on March 31, 1994. (Then he remarked that "I hope I didn't panic and announce the pullout too soon.") In 1996, Anthony Lake, his tortured and timid national security adviser, went so far as to codify an "exit strategy doctrine": "Before we send our troops into a foreign country, we should know how and when we're going to get them out." Lake was making omniscience into a condition of the use of American force.

THE DOCTRINE OF "exit strategy" fundamentally misunderstands the nature of war and, more generally, the nature of historical action. In the name of caution, it denies the contingency of human affairs. For the knowledge of the end is not given to us at the beginning. We cannot completely predict or completely determine the outcome of our best endeavors, though our ignorance of their outcome does not make them less necessary or less just. No great deed, private or public, has ever been undertaken in a bliss of certainty. "Exit strategy" is for American strategy what "closure" is for American psychology: a spurious guarantee that Americans will not have to tolerate a condition of inconclusiveness for very long.

In war, certainly, an adherence to dogma is not strategic wisdom. "The only concept that more or less corresponds to the factors that distinguish real war from war on paper," Clausewitz famously wrote, is the concept of "friction." Among these "effects that cannot be measured, because they are largely due to chance," he added, is "the weather. Fog can prevent the enemy from being seen in time...." It follows that a good commander is a flexible commander: the sort of commander who would send Apache helicopters where F-117s cannot go, because the cause is too precious to surrender to the clouds; the sort of commander who would wisely order a mission to creep.

America's commitment to NATO would itself have failed the test of "exit strategy." It has been 50 splendid, exitless years. So, too, would other American deployments that have been essential to the protection of our values and our interests: the three American divisions in South Korea, for example. For "exit strategy" is more than a scruple about prudence in the use of force. (Who is for the imprudent use of force?) It is a scruple about the use of force itself. It is an inhibition, an intimidation. It rigs the discussion about military power in a way that makes any ambitious projection of it unlikely. The antithesis of "exit strategy" is courage.

Saving General Powell. As a consequence of the disappointment of Operation Allied Force, the Powell Doctrine is enjoying a revival. "This only affirms the Powell Doctrine," commented Senator McCain. "This is more reminiscent of the gradual escalation and bombing pauses that characterized the Vietnam War." No greater malediction can be hurled at a military operation. (But McCain was speaking critically of the Powell Doctrine; he called for ground troops.) And in an unexpected outburst of Powellism, Philip Gourevitch in *The New Yorker* fretted about "a new military bog." He did not call for the introduction of ground troops; he called for the government to "declare its intent." Gourevitch writes as if he hates Clinton's hypocrisy more than Milosevic's cruelty. But we are fighting the West's own butcher; and it is owing precisely to such platitudes that the administration is restraining itself from doing all that needs to be done to stop him. (A new military bog in Rwanda would have been a godsend.)

Powell himself has been happy to express a feeling of vindication: "The challenge of just using air power is that you leave it in the hands of your adversary to decide when he's been punished enough.... So the initiative will remain with President Milosevic." The implication of Powell's remark is that he himself would have visited ground troops upon the Serbian rampage, so as to cut it off and kill it. The notion is grotesque. It was Powell who refused to consider the deployment of American soldiers in Bosnia during the long years of its excruciation. The Powell Doctrine (which also worships exit strategies) was significantly responsible for the military and political climate that has resulted in a half-measure such as Operation Allied Force. It was not formulated to encourage the use of American ground troops as an instrument of foreign policy. Quite the contrary. It promulgated a set of conditions for the use of American ground troops that will almost never be met. Powell is prepared to fight a war, but not a war that will ever be fought. In this way, the general can appear as a man of war and a man of peace. This trick accounts for his absurd popularity.

Powell's criticism of Operation Allied Force is that the war in the Balkans is not being waged like the war in the Gulf. For Powell, the Gulf war is the paradigm of war. It was, after all, a glorious victory. Of course, it was also a war fought with overwhelming force and complete dominance of the air in a featureless landscape where it almost never rains. Strategically speaking, Operation Desert Storm was freakishly easy. It was a victory, moreover, but it was not a glorious victory. America owed its success in the desert not least to the definition of success that Powell propounded. This definition excluded from the war the most difficult and the most urgent objective of all, the removal of Saddam Hussein from power.

It was said at the time that this objective would have fractured the international consensus in support of the war, which mandated only the liberation of Kuwait. But this was not the only American anxiety about the inclusion of the political objective among our war aims. There was another American anxiety, and it was that the political objective

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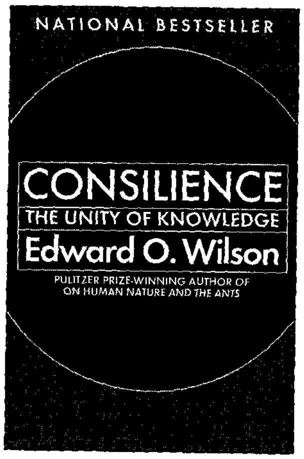
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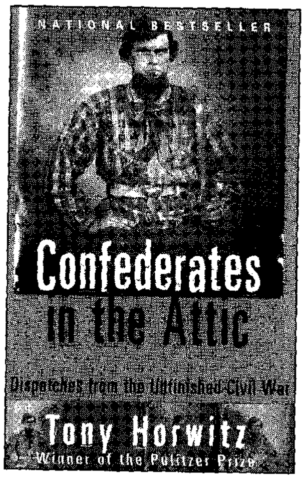
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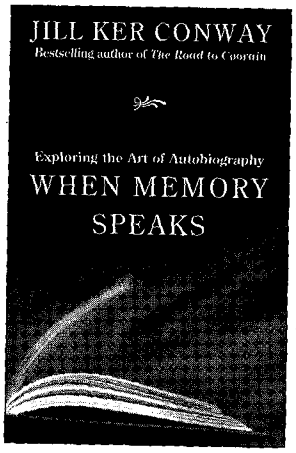
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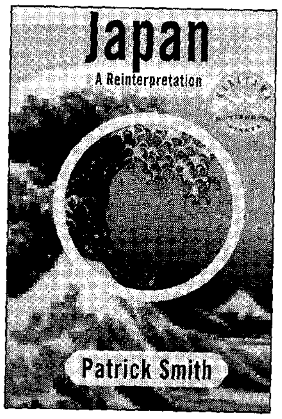
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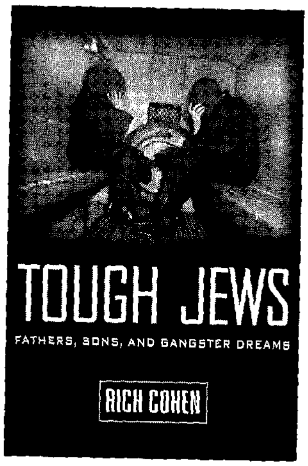
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FATHERS, SONS, AND GANGSTER DREAMS
RICH COHEN

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The Milosevic Doctrine.

could not have been accomplished without a ground assault on Baghdad. This would have been dangerous. American soldiers would have been wounded and killed. And so American soldiers left the real trouble where they found it and came home.

If Saddam Hussein ever again makes use of his obscene arsenal, Colin Powell will have a lot to answer for. But there the general stood in his sanctity at the Academy Awards, wrapping himself in World War II and thrilling the young flesh. "Every generation has the potential for greatness," he preached. "Had those men and women failed in that test of their greatness, we would live far different lives today." Then they rolled the clip of Steven Spielberg's recreation of the least Powell-like military operation ever launched. You would not have known that it is Powell who has been instructing this generation of men and women to fail in their own test of greatness. Hitler is not the only test.

In the current crisis, the Clinton administration's euphemism for Powellism is "permissive environment." At the White House they are hoarse from protesting that they will introduce ground troops only into such an environment. They are not offering a definition of "permissiveness," but it is hard to imagine a circumstance of conflict in Kosovo that would fall within such a definition. There are trees in the Balkans, and mountains, and the devil's weather. Perhaps "permissiveness" means only peacekeeping, in which case the United States will dispatch its troops after they were desperately needed. Maybe American troops can police a partition, when it will be in the interests of Milosevic to keep them out of harm's way. They can give the remains of Kosovo, and the remains of NATO, and the remains of American interventionism, a decent burial.

Character Is (Other People's) Fate. Everything that Clinton does is so tiresomely Clintonian. This war is no exception. Its limitations and its inconsistencies are his limitations and his inconsistencies. He believes in the dissociation of actions from consequences. He does not like entailments. Impunity is his ideal. It is no wonder that such a man would kindle to the cruise missile, and more generally to the moral convenience of the technology of precision guidance. It allows the president to believe that America can fight a war and win a war without losing an American life. In all our sorties over Iraq there has been not a single American casualty. Never mind that the air war has left the regime in Baghdad and its instruments of mass destruction intact. The important thing is that there were American actions without American consequences. War without death: an apotheosis of Clintonism.

On March 23, the day before the bombing of Serbia (and the emptying of Kosovo) began, the president treated the members of AFSCME to a tutorial on America's actions in the Balkans. This was the speech in which he cheerfully confided, on the eve of a war, that "if the American people don't know anything about me—else—they know that I don't like to use military force." But this was not the most egregious of his reflections. He proceeded to pose as the savior of Bosnia. "I know what happened in Bosnia. The United States and our allies, along with courageous people in Bosnia and in Croatia who refused to be subdued and fought back, found the unity and the will to stand up against the aggression, and we helped to end the war."

Clinton's heroic account of his Bosnia policy is outrageous.

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It is true that he found the unity and the will, but only after years of averting his gaze from those same courageous people. The torments of Sarajevo, Prijedor, Banja Luka, Gorazde, and Srebrenica were an indirect consequence of this man's shallowness, of his politicized view of life. The polls told him to let the cleansing be. At AFSCME, however, Clinton had the temerity to compare himself to Churchill. "I want to talk to you about Kosovo today, but just remember this: It's about our values. What if someone had listened to Winston Churchill and stood up to Adolf Hitler earlier? How many peoples' lives might have been saved, and how many American lives might have been saved?" This, from the least Churchillian figure of our time. Surely the important point about the Americans who were killed in World War II is not that their lives might have been saved. (When Hitler came to power in Germany, war became inevitable. It was his reason for being. There are villains with whom there can be no getting back to talking peace and security.) Surely the important point is that their lives were not lost for nothing.

Unfortunately, this is not a point that this president can make. Operation Allied Force asks many things of the American people, and one of the most difficult things it asks of them is to be led into this war by this man. So let us be clear. At this miserable moment, it is a mark of moral and historical seriousness to support this morally and historically unserious man. Clinton's decision to attack Milosevic—or, in the shabby words of *Newsweek*, his "fail[ure] to offer Milosevic a face-saving compromise"—was the right decision. He is not admirable, but he is right. I am not sure if he understands why. His prosecution of the war will tell.

A*fter Such Knowingness, What Forgiveness?* It is springtime for realism. Idealism died with the cold war, didn't it? But apparently it didn't. The United States certainly has an interest in the stability of Europe and the authority of NATO, but the truth is that Operation Allied Force is an idealist's war. This maddens the realists, who thought that they were rid of such costly moistness. Republicans who swelled with pride during Reagan's war in Grenada and Bush's war in Panama are cool toward Clinton's war in Yugoslavia. This is what isolationism means, in Washington: my party's opposition to your party's intervention. Some conservatives are redescribing the cold war as nothing more than a great-power rivalry. Michael Mandelbaum's heartless old crack that foreign policy is not social work is being fanned back into life.

Thomas L. Friedman is one of the tough guys. He knows how the world really works. He first proved his toughness in 1995. "I don't give two cents about Bosnia," he wrote. "Not two cents." Four years later, he writes: "The question we are wrestling with in Kosovo today is this: How should Americans react when bad things happen in unimportant places?" Friedman still does not grasp that a place in which innocent men, women, and children are being expelled and exterminated is an important place. It is a place that asks about the philosophy by which we claim to live. For this reason, Pristina is a more important place than Davos.

I don't mean to be unfair. Friedman is not altogether unmoved: "I'm glad we're punishing the Serbs now for their ethnic cleansing. It's barbaric." Good. Also, "give war a chance." Also good. But now what? "I want NATO to stop what was bad and get out." So does NATO. But how? Not with ground troops, certainly. "While NATO steps up the air war, it also needs to step up its diplomacy." Friedman wants us to negotiate with Milosevic! He wants "a modified Rambouillet deal that would give the Kosovars internationally protected autonomy in a Kosovo still under Serb sovereignty, or a partition of Kosovo." But Kosovo will shortly cease to exist, except as a ghost. I also wonder whether Friedman would be willing, in the same spirit of realism about what a strong state will permit for a stateless minority in its dominion, to consider a modified Oslo deal that would give the Palestinians internationally protected autonomy in a Palestine still under Israeli sovereignty.

Fareed Zakaria is another one of the tough guys. He, too, is disabused of the sentimental illusion that the foreign policy of the United States must be animated by ideals. Not long ago he observed acerbically that "today it is the idealists who urge intervention—in Haiti, Somalia, Rwanda, Bosnia—while strategists, like Henry Kissinger, urge selectivity, caution, moderation." Idealists cannot be strategists. They are too simple for strategy. "In fact the new interventionists urge American involvement in precisely those areas where Washington has few national interests—this ensures that its motives are pure." Purity is what idealists want. But Zakaria knows that this is an impure world.

HE KNOWS, for example, that Slobodan Milosevic "is no Adolf Hitler. He is not even Saddam Hussein." I do not recall Zakaria getting too exercised about Saddam Hussein; but then Saddam Hussein is also no Adolf Hitler. Anyway, it is the responsibility of the realist never to get too exercised: *surtout pas de zèle* and all that. And so Zakaria writes with condescension about Operation Allied Force: "[The administration's] goal—to stop the atrocities in Kosovo—is a noble effort but a naïve one." But Zakaria is not naïve. He recognizes that the crisis in Kosovo pales before the crisis in the global financial system. And he recognizes that NATO has "only two choices": to "wage war" or to "negotiate peace." If it wages war, however, "Kosovo will have to be armed and protected by NATO, probably in perpetuity." No exit there.

So Zakaria prefers that we negotiate peace. Since he is not worried about purity, he proposes that "someone could take a message to Milosevic that NATO would be willing to restart negotiations. (The pope's intermediary might be just the person to use.)" Zakaria's own plan for the appeasement of Milosevic is "a slice of Kosovo, to be made autonomous or quasi-independent." And then he, too, takes cover behind Winston Churchill. "As Winston Churchill—hardly shy about using military force—once said, there are certain circumstances in which 'jaw, jaw is better than war, war.'" Jaw, jaw: There speaks the gentleman from the Council on Foreign Relations. This is not realism. This is complacence. But it is not the historical task of the United States to make the world safe for brandy and cigars. ■

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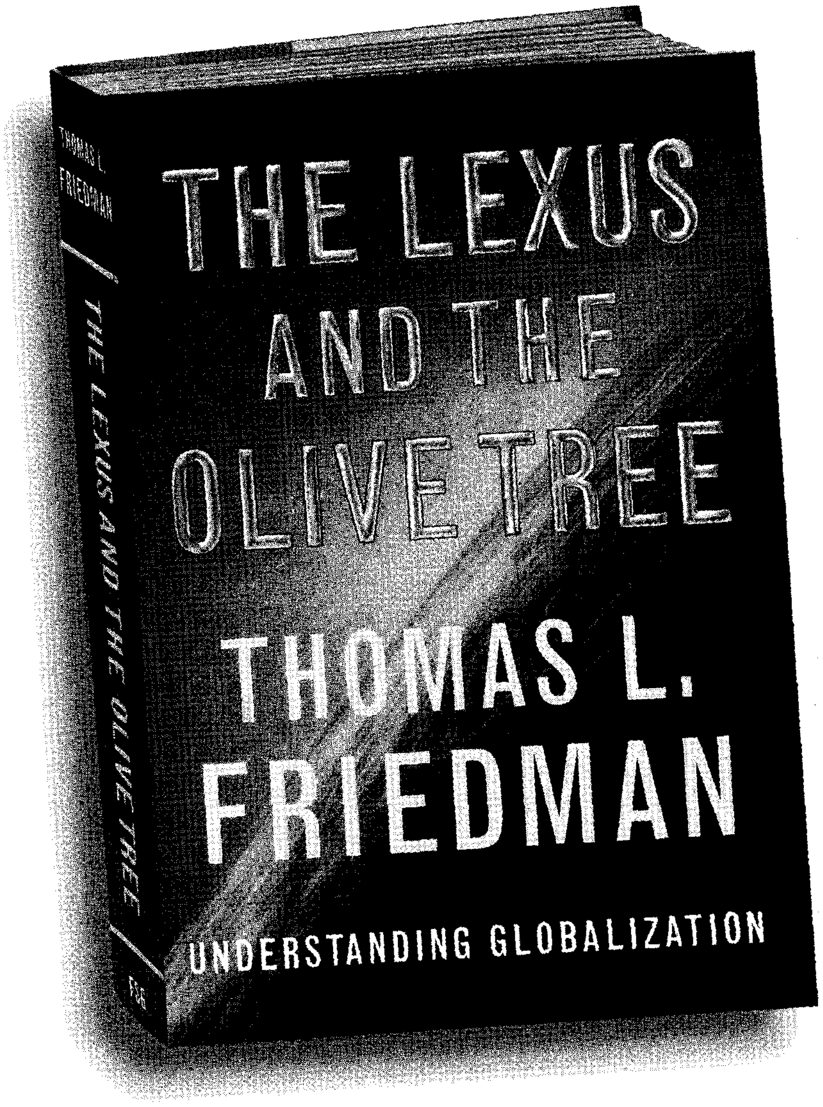
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Why Clinton fell for Arafat.

The Tilt

By MARTIN PERETZ

IT WAS THE LAST DAY of 1998, and Bill Clinton was at Hilton Head, South Carolina, for Renaissance Weekend, that 1,500-person parody of a literary salon. Amy Weiss was fielding questions about whether the president would actually attend any panel discussions. "It hasn't been determined yet. He's been, as you know, golfing this morning. He's going to golf," she said. "He'll probably be on the golf course until at least three p.m." A reporter then asked: "What about books, Amy? Tell us about books." To which she replied: "Gee, you know, I've had some requests for what the president has been reading this weekend. He brought two books with him, two books for pleasure reading...."

Of course, we don't know if he read either book, or, if he did, whether they gave him pleasure. One was James Chace's biography of Dean Acheson. If Clinton turned its pages, and if he compared his own two secretaries of state to Acheson, whose exemplary temperament, knowledge, and character showed in virtually his every act, then the book couldn't have pleased the president. Warren Christopher was gray, and his surface did not camouflage an inner subtlety. Madeleine Albright is an amateur, rhetorically extravagant and strategically timid. These hapless guardians of U.S. interests and values in the world are Clinton's partners in history.

The second book was Fouad Ajami's *The Dream Palace of the Arabs*. One would think Clinton might be especially curious about this one. After all, Ajami (a frequent TNR contributor) had written some eloquent presidential words for one of those Washington *sulkhas* between Arabs and Israelis. Moreover, the Middle East seems to engage this president's attentions. So why wouldn't he want to know what Ajami thinks about the region where he has staked so much?

If Clinton did read Ajami's book, however, he didn't learn a thing. What Ajami argues is that there has been for decades a struggle among the Arabs between the realists and the rhapsodists, the modernizers and the fearful, the wealth-creators and the wealth-amassers, the humanists and the brutalizers, the tolerant and the extremists, the open-minded and the insular. It is his view also that the odds have been tipped to the second of each of these dyads by the weight given to the Arab-Israeli conflict by foreign powers, and especially by the United States. Moreover, it has been Washington's remarkably consistent view of how that conflict should be transcended that skews the balance, intrudes on the natural ameliorative rhythms of history, and inflames and perpetuates hostilities. This is bad enough for Israel, and understandable to those many Americans who care about that country. But how it distorts Arab societies is not so easily grasped. Perhaps this is because there are so few in the United States who genuinely care about these societies and because those who claim to care think they vindicate their concern with axiomatic rancor toward Israel.

When Clinton ran for president in 1992, he put himself forward not just as a friend of Israel but as someone who comprehended that the fixation of the Arabs on Israel was itself a reason for Arab economic and social backwardness (though he did not articulate it that way; "backward" is not a p.c. word). Clinton contrasted his views with those of President Bush and Bush's secretary of state, James Baker, who certified themselves as almost instinctually antagonistic to the Jewish state in ways that hadn't been seen in the capital since the stewardship of U.S. foreign policy by John Foster Dulles. The most illogical instance of the Bush-Baker animus was the pressure on Israel to make further accommodations to the Palestinians to compensate the pro-Western Arab states for allowing the United States to rescue Kuwait and Saudi Arabia from Iraq. This was called "linkage," and Clinton let it be known that his administration would have none of it.

The signs came early that linkage would, in fact, continue its long and dishonest life. The first tip-off was personnel: the new administration kept on Secretary Baker's old peace-process team—men who worked eagerly for a boss from whose tongue slipped the pronouncement "fuck the Jews"—Dennis Ross, Aaron Miller, and Daniel Kurtzer. The trio gave Baker cover for his antagonism to Zionism.

Since Clinton loved Israel and was close to so many Jews, however, whatever he did was ipso facto an act of friendship, "tough love" at the very worst. I myself once wrote as much. And the holdovers from Bush and Baker were second- or third-tier folk. They couldn't be the real makers of policy. But Christopher and Albright weren't exactly sympathetic toward Israel. Albright, especially, has turned U.S. differences with Israel into a personal vendetta against that country's quite difficult prime minister. Contrast her truculence toward Netanyahu with her cordiality toward Arafat. One high administration official, on seeing her kissing the Palestinian leader during his last visit to Washington, said, "Oh my God, she's all over him." Albright also entertained Arafat at a dinner at her home, an almost unprecedented intimacy.

Albright's sympathy for Arafat has tangled roots that are ideological and personal. Ideologically, she hails from the Democratic Party's dovish wing, the Carter-Vance wing, which usually sees justice on the side of history's losers and is attracted, by some strange tropism, to movements and regimes hostile to the United States. This element is not as large as it once threatened to become, but it is enjoying the tenure of a president who, while turning right on domestic affairs, has remained mired in the *Schwärmerei* of the left on foreign policy. (This explains why Albright's despised rival in the running of the country's diplomacy is Sandy Berger, a trade lawyer whose only credential for his job is that he is an old chum of Clinton's from the McGovern campaign.) And another stream feeds into Albright's attitude toward Israel. She is also an acolyte of Zbigniew Brzezinski, who, as Jimmy Carter's hard-line national security adviser, waged a continuous diplomatic assault against Israel.

Of course, there is the delicate question of the secretary's personal identity. Is it really possible that for all those years Albright did not know the truth about her Jewish descent? And, if she repeatedly chose not to ask the obvious questions, as Michael Dobbs shows in a recent *New Yorker* piece, isn't it possible that her discomfort with the Jews extends to a Jewish state, which is nothing if not self-confident? To be sure, there is no mechanical connection between identity and policy, but this particular inner unease could impinge upon her dealings with the Jewish state.

Still, why the administration's obsession with Israel and with bringing it to heel? It's not as if Clinton's people had failed to pursue other initiatives in the region. They had, and this is exactly the problem. Each of these initiatives was a dismal failure. Albright was the one who announced "a road map leading to normal relations" with Iran. There was, she assured us, imminent change coming about in that country and in its relations with the United States. The election of Mohammed Khatami as president was merely an augury of the future. She offered no analysis of why great expectations were in order and no specifics of what exactly would change. Perhaps this was in dread anticipation of nothing. As it happens, the furtive contacts between Washington and Tehran came to naught. There was a rash of murders against liberalizing dissidents (see "The Veiled Threat," by Azar Nafisi, TNR, February 22). The regime undertook once again a systematic campaign against the Bahai and their schools. While what one might think of as reformers—reformer is always a relative word—won some municipal elections, the official political culture remains viciously anti-liberal. You no longer hear much from Albright about the breakthrough with Tehran; mounting evidence of the passing of nuclear materials from Russia to Iran seems to have made the issue moot. At least the failure of change in Iran was not blamed on Israel.

THERE WERE NO expectations that Iraq was about to change its character. This would have to await a mobilization by the United States and its allies. Twice Washington marched its troops up the hill, and twice they came down. Nothing had changed. Well, not exactly nothing. What had changed was that Desert Storm was largely forgotten and that the United States is not recognized, either by our voluntary friends or by our circumstantial confederates, as a credible guardian of the Persian Gulf region. They know that we are not serious about toppling Saddam Hussein, and so they are unwilling to risk joining us in the threadbare policy of sanctions and pinpricks without end. The Arabs are not silly; they understand this for the weakness it is. Nonetheless, the administration needs a more satisfying explanation for why, let's say, the Saudis really will not even let us fly missions against Iraq from Saudi territory, even though those fighter planes are ultimately there to protect them.

Madeleine Albright, Sandy Berger, Dennis Ross, and Martin Indyk (the strangest of the Middle East hands at State and the most single-minded) all come up with the identical explanation proffered by George Bush and James Baker nearly a decade ago for why the Arabs were so skittish in the great coalition: Israel had not done its part to make the Arabs feel that they had done what they could to secure justice for the Palestinians. There are real reasons why the administration clings to this interpretation of Arab reticence. One is that the Washington policymakers have little experience in that area other than in the peace process. This is what they know, and they know almost nothing else. Anyway, it is gratifying to be able to blame Israel for circumstances before which the United States is powerless. A great power does not enjoy chafing at circumstance.

Many of these circumstances are new. The first and perhaps most important is that the Gulf states are increasingly impoverished. The most important of these, Saudi Arabia, which has a GDP of $145 billion, also has a debt of roughly the same sum. Per capita income has fallen from $19,000 in 1981 to $6,000 today. The elaborate system of free education and medical care, cash emoluments for reaching a certain age or attaining a college degree that constituted the high wall of security for the enormous royal family and its associated acquisitive elites, is now being dismantled. The monarchy can no longer purchase the consent that it once commanded. To many Saudis, we are no longer their defenders. Rather, we come to them suspect, as salesmen, selling products and services they do not need and, moreover, cannot afford. We are seen similarly elsewhere in the Gulf, and there is nothing Benjamin Netanyahu can give Yasir Arafat that will change any of this.

Now, it is the case that the United States and the West have a strategic interest in the survival of these regimes. Liberals have a normative interest in their survival, too: in most of these societies, and certainly in Saudi Arabia as in Iran during the Shah's reign, governments, repressive as they may be, are ordinarily more humane and tolerant than the general population below. But, again, Israel is not part of the equation, and it is also not part of the odds. The discontent of the Shia in some of these countries, the paucity of productive work, the stirrings of Muslim ultras, the tightness of the public culture, the indifference to real science and scientific thought, the fact that (more than 200 years after its arrival in Europe) the Industrial Revolution has not yet arrived anywhere from the Maghreb to Mesopotamia, the utter absence of constitutionalism: These are the issues that now affect and infect the Arab world. The West may wish to help those it sees as its friends navigate the difficult shoals of change. But whether Palestinian flags are planted on 50 percent of the West Bank or on 60 percent will influence none of these weighty matters, none at all.

The Arabs know about mirages in the desert, and the wise ones don't want to be deluded by them. They had begun to grasp that the question of Palestine was a continuing diversion from the real problems they had been so deft at avoiding. They had begun, some of them, at least, to liberate themselves from the burden of Palestine. Once again, however, a U.S. administration is pressing the primacy of Palestine. But Palestine is primal only to the Palestinians, who have not yet fully grasped that they, too, must forfeit some ambitions and aspirations if there is to be any chance of a stable settlement with Israel.

In the cartography of peace, not all that much finally differentiates Netanyahu from his Israeli political opponents. The Clinton administration, then, has been reckless in trying to foist the notion on the three salient publics—American, Israeli, Palestinian—that Netanyahu is a fanatic and beyond the pale. (I write this as someone who would vote for Ehud

Barak, were I an Israeli citizen.) Netanyahu did, after all, break the intoxication of the Likud with the notion that there were no possible territorial compromises from the idea of Greater Israel. Like other U.S. interventions in Israeli elections, and especially the last one, when then-Ambassador to Israel Indyk bamboozled the president into virtually stumping for Shimon Peres, this may well backfire. Moreover, a democratic country should under no circumstances be callous with the democratic verdict of a democratic ally. In undermining the present prime minister's legitimacy, Clinton encourages Arafat to demand that Clinton secure from Netanyahu one more concession, one more gesture, ad infinitum.

Bill Clinton has taken Yasir Arafat and his Palestinian Authority under the security and economic umbrella of Pax Americana. But he has done that without exacting any currency in Arafat's or the Palestinians' anti-American politics. If this provokes some Israelis, it absolutely mystifies many Arabs, who can distinguish between friends and foes. The cover the administration gives to Arafat also unnerves the Hashemites, who see Arafat's sudden interest in a federation with Jordan as a challenge to them. Some of the Gulf Arabs also wonder why the United States is so eager to assist (and to persuade them to assist) the Arafat Palestinians, who make absolutely no secret of their sympathy for the Baath tyranny in Baghdad. If linkage is anywhere appropriate in this web of historic hatreds, it is most relevant here. But Clinton asked virtually nothing of Arafat other than that he not declare independence in early May. He did not ask of Arafat—and he surely would not have gotten—a true commitment to end the official inflammatory rhetoric against the Jews.

THE PRESIDENT'S TILT toward Arafat is neither good policy nor popular in the Congress or the country, and Al Gore will have to find some way of separating himself from its curious ethical assumptions. (One thing is certain: On this issue, George W. Bush won't be trapped in the politics of his father.) Yes, Mrs. Clinton, just as you said there should be, there will be a state called Palestine, borders as yet undefined. The Palestinian economy will be very corrupt. There will be a coercive Muslim state, run by an extortionate gang of thugs in the worst Third World tradition, which is why tens of thousands of Christian Arabs have been going into permanent exile. And this is the prognosis when everyone still contemplates Arafat as president. Just wait till the Islamic literalists make their bid for power. There is a long tradition of intra-Palestinian terror, and it won't end with a Palestinian state.

Not every issue separating Israel from the Palestinians will be resolved. My model is the tense but formally peaceful relationship between India and Pakistan, not the best of the world's bilateral relationships but certainly not the worst, either. Kashmir belongs to India, and India will never give it up. Pakistan does not have Kashmir but claims it and will never forfeit its claim. That's about how the question of Jerusalem will be answered. Israel will have it, and Palestine will want it. This is a very imperfect world. We shouldn't exaggerate the beauties of peace, at least not the emerging modus vivendi between Israel and Palestine. But it will be better than war. ■

The case for compassionate access.

Merciful Medicine

By JEROME GROOPMAN

THIS PAST YEAR, I waited anxiously to hear if one of my patients, a woman in her late sixties with widespread breast cancer, would obtain an experimental treatment called Herceptin. She, like tens of thousands of other women, had exhausted all standard options for therapy. Herceptin is a novel approach to breast cancer treatment, a genetically engineered antibody that targets the surface of the tumor. With the medical community expecting FDA approval for Herceptin in the coming months, the drug company Genentech opened a so-called "compassionate" program outside of the usual structures of clinical trials to provide Herceptin to women who might benefit from it. But there were too many women in need and not enough Herceptin available, so names were selected at random on a monthly basis.

Three months in a row, my patient, a stoic and deeply religious woman, was told that she had not been selected. She accepted it as God's will. The breast cancer grew until it was clear that no intervention would save her life. Although there was no guarantee that Herceptin would have worked, her passing caused a profound sense of regret. Two months after her death, the FDA approved the drug. We had not done everything that could have been done.

One of the most important components of the experimental-drug development process, the compassionate program (also called "expanded access") exists in a gray area of federal regulation, drug company prerogatives, and patient advocacy. To understand the nature of the compassionate release of experimental drugs, you have to understand the standard sequence of drug development recommended by the FDA and adopted by the pharmaceutical industry. After extensive testing in small animals, drugs are tested for toxicity in humans during what are known as Phase I trials. This first phase is designed to gauge the side effects of the drugs, usually on groups of three or four people that get very low doses of the drug, followed by groups that receive successively higher doses until intolerable toxicity is reached. There is no expectation of clinical benefit in this first phase. Furthermore, Phase I studies take virtually all comers.

If the drug has acceptable levels of toxicity, the second phase begins. Here, patients are segregated into groups based on specific disease condition. Thus, there would be a

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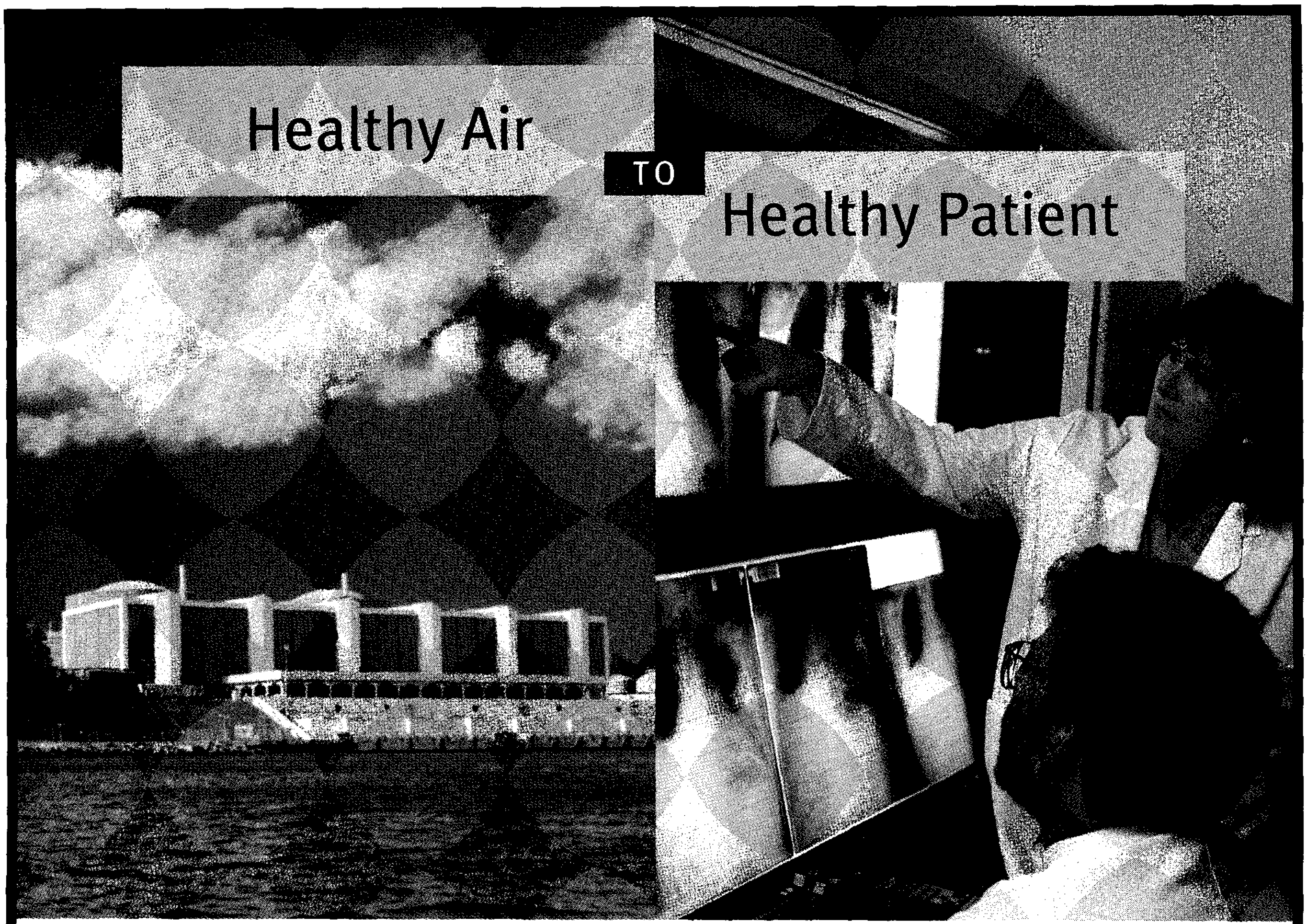

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Phase II study in lung cancer to assess three or four different doses of the drug with ten patients at each dose level; another study, done in parallel, would test the drug in similar numbers of women with breast cancer. The idea of Phase II, in short, is to demonstrate safety in larger numbers of people and to determine if a particular disease is ameliorated by the treatment.

Phase III comprises the pivotal clinical trials that a drug company uses in its application for FDA approval. The experimental agent is compared against a placebo, if that is ethical, or against standard therapies. Usually, several hundred patients are enrolled in Phase III. The drug company uses the results in its FDA application and, later, as a marketing tool. While every company seeks the widest market for its drug, the company is leveraging its bets in selecting people for Phase III. The company's primary objective is FDA approval, so, to get a uniform and favorable-prognosis group of patients, there are generally rigorous eligibility criteria established; many patients in need are turned away.

This has sparked demands for another avenue of access to experimental drugs. Compassionate programs were a response to AIDS activists who relentlessly hectored the FDA and drug companies. The FDA had no template for such programs. The only approximation was the so-called Phase IV post-marketing surveillance that the FDA sometimes required of companies when the drug appeared ready for approval but more information on a certain safety aspect was needed. Here the company would monitor a certain number of patients receiving the drug by prescription and report back to the FDA on its tolerance. The costs of the post-approval monitoring are small, since the drug is being sold on the open market. The costs of a compassionate program, by contrast, are substantial since the drug is given gratis and the company must broadly monitor all the recipients.

OF COURSE, with all drug therapy, as the numbers of people receiving an agent increase from the hundreds in Phase III to the hundreds of thousands by prescription, a "real world" picture of the drug's side effects and benefits emerges. Sometimes, as in the notorious case of thalidomide—approved abroad—disastrous toxicities are observed with widespread use. That episode has guided much of FDA thinking over the past decades. Other times, uses of the drug beyond those assessed in Phase III studies become apparent. This latter added value occurs when physicians prescribe the drug for indications not approved by the FDA, which is their legal right but not a practice a drug company can endorse.

For pharmaceutical companies setting up compassionate programs, the process seems fraught with financial and strategic risk. The company must absorb the losses of distributing the treatment for free. The data collected on the patients must be analyzed and presented to the FDA. Finally, patients who do not qualify for the strict Phase III studies are liable to suffer greater toxicity for the drug because their organ functions—whether it be liver, kidney, lung, or heart—are often tenuous. A drug can be tarred with a bad reputation from such adverse events prior to FDA approval, making marketing more difficult.

It was thus a shotgun wedding that brought the drug companies and the FDA to the expanded-access altar, but the political pressure and the threat of disruption from AIDS activists were too great to resist. Yet there remains no organized structure, and compassionate release of experimental agents is still largely a prerogative of drug companies. A company walks a fine line in the homestretch of a Phase III study, anxious to have its drug approved by the FDA but bending to patient and clinician demand. The FDA has no formal regulations about these compassionate programs. It reacts to a proposal by the drug company, and, so long as the program fulfills the minimum requirements for scientific and ethical merit and targets a population with the disease that was included in Phase II studies, the FDA approves the drug. Then the company has to decide how much of the drug should be released. The drug company wants to limit its losses and often is not in full production mode (since the date of FDA approval is not certain). Every patient who might benefit from compassionate release will not necessarily obtain it. This was the painful reality for my patient with breast cancer.

IN CONTRAST, several of my patients with AIDS were luckier. Their names were chosen for the expanded-access program of the first protease inhibitor, saquinavir. Here, again, the drug was in short supply, so, some six months before the drug's expected approval by the FDA, the company, Hoffmann-La Roche, responded to activists' pressure with a lottery. Three of my patients who were failing their antiviral medicines and were on the edge of the fatal spiral of AIDS were selected. Saquinavir stabilized them over the course of a year until other, more potent protease inhibitors were available. They are alive and doing well.

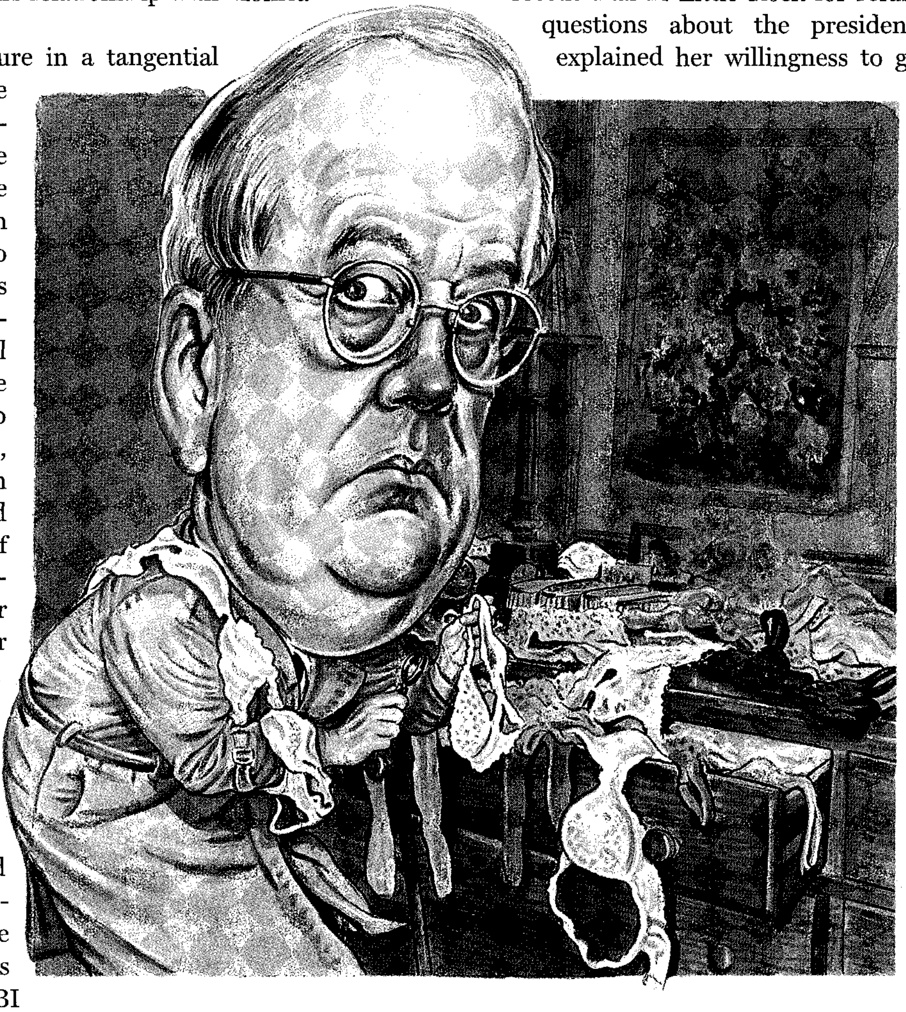
This stark lesson in caprice makes it imperative that attention and structure be placed on compassionate programs. Expanded access should become part of the standard stages of drug development. The FDA should generate a set of criteria designed to encompass the largest number of patients who might benefit from the treatment. This, in the long run, is in the regulators' interests because it gives the clearest picture prior to full approval of the potential side effects and tolerance of the therapy. It should reduce the harrowing surprises that marked drugs like thalidomide and make infrequent the need for recalls once pills are in the pharmacy. The drug company should be given incentives to overcome its understandable risk aversion with such programs. To lessen the financial burden of distribution of free drugs, some form of tax write-off or other government plum like an extended patent should be offered. If the drug appears to be well-tolerated in a broader population of patients than those enrolled in Phase III studies, this information could be introduced into the package labeling of the drug and thus could be a boon in the drug's marketing. And, although no drug company wants to hear bad news, it is valuable in avoiding lawsuits to have more information on a drug's limitations and problems as it moves into a real-world population, beyond the rarefied groups that compose Phase III studies. Patients in need would no longer be selected at random, some offered a possibility of life and others consigned to facing death without hope. ■

Kenneth Starr's last crusade.

Steele Trap

By JEFFREY ROSEN

ORDINARILY, A WITNESS who changes her story in a way that makes herself an object of ridicule or disgrace is viewed as more credible rather than more suspicious: the law of evidence calls this a statement against interest. But, in May, on the basis of just such a statement, Julie Hiatt Steele will become the first and perhaps the only person to be tried for crimes arising out of Kenneth Starr's investigation of President Clinton's relationship with Monica Lewinsky.



A peripheral figure in a tangential outgrowth of the Lewinsky investigation, Steele is one of several people whom Kathleen Willey claims to have told she was groped by the president in the Oval Office when she went to ask for a job on November 29, 1993. In March 1997, Steele told Michael Isikoff of *Newsweek* that Willey had come to her house to tell her about an unwanted advance on the night it allegedly occurred. Four months later, she recanted and told Isikoff that she had lied to him at Willey's request. She then repeated this recantation to FBI agents working for Kenneth Starr, before two grand juries called by Starr, and on "Larry King Live." Willey, meanwhile, continued to insist that she had confided in Steele at the time of the alleged advance, and Starr chose to believe her rather than Steele. In January, he indicted Steele on three counts of obstruction of justice and one of making false statements to federal agents. If convicted, she could be sentenced to 35 years in prison.

Now that a criminal indictment of President Clinton seems hard to imagine, it's easy to dismiss the trial of Julie Hiatt Steele as the puzzling but insignificant by-product of an exhausted investigation. But, in fact, the Steele case reveals one of Starr's most distressing legacies: the use of perjury and obstruction of justice laws to threaten tangential witnesses for giving testimony about President Clinton that Starr and his prosecutors choose not to believe. At her recent trial in Little Rock for refusing to answer Starr's questions about the president, Susan McDougal explained her willingness to go to jail by insisting that Starr wanted her to lie. Webster Hubbell, the former associate attorney general, whom Starr indicted for the third time last year, will be tried in June on charges of committing fraud and making false statements. Like Steele, McDougal and Hubbell claim that Starr is prosecuting them because they refuse to support his theory that President Clinton pressured them to lie. Indeed, Steele testified at McDougal's trial last week that Starr is guilty of something similar to what he accuses Clinton of doing: repeatedly threatening witnesses who refuse to give false testimony on his behalf.

Even if you assume, as Starr does, that Steele is lying, it's reckless to use the obstruction of justice laws to resolve swearing contests between tangential witnesses in civil cases. If the Paula Jones case had reached a jury, Kathleen Willey might possibly have been allowed to testify, to support Jones's theory that Clinton has a habit of rewarding employees who accept his advances and punishing those who do

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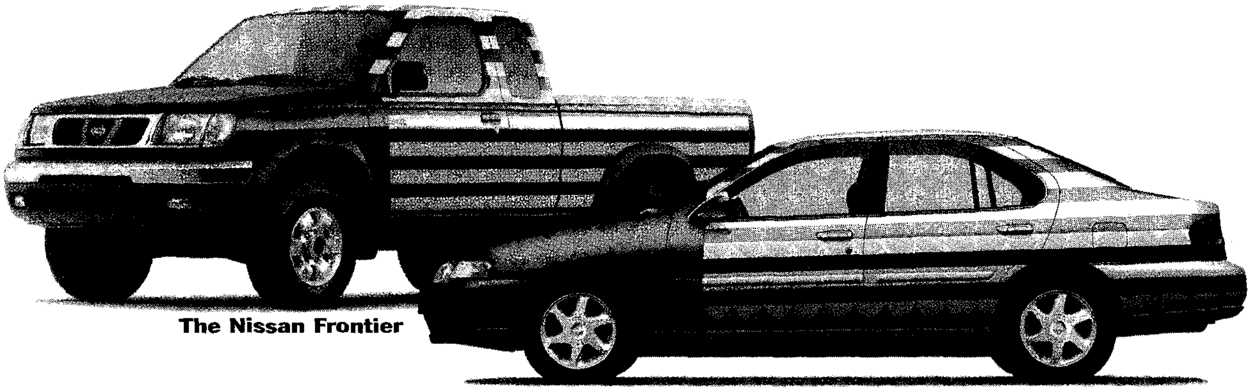

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not. If Willey had been called to testify, Clinton's lawyers might have tried to undermine her story by introducing Steele's affidavit. Recognizing that memory is fallible and lies are rampant, our legal system ordinarily relies on juries to resolve contested questions of credibility. By presuming to decide for himself who is telling the truth and then threatening to imprison those with whom he disagrees, Starr is usurping the jury's central role. If prosecutors routinely indicted defense witnesses for perjury and obstruction of justice before a trial began, they would deny the accused the right to put on a defense, because the mere threat of indictment might silence witnesses with whom the prosecutor disagrees—even witnesses who are telling the truth.

As Michael Isikoff makes clear in his new book, *Uncovering Clinton,* moreover, it was Paula Jones's legal advisers who arranged the initial contact between Linda Tripp and Starr's office—a fact that the prosecutors failed to disclose when they asked the Justice Department to authorize Starr to investigate the Lewinsky affair. In light of the collusion between Jones's lawyers and Starr's prosecutors, it's alarming to realize that Starr is using the powers of his office to try to imprison Steele, who might have challenged the credibility of one of Jones's corroborating witnesses if the case had gone to trial. But what makes the indictment of Steele even more troubling is that it's hard to identify any pending criminal or civil trials that her comments could, in fact, have obstructed. The discovery process in the Paula Jones case was already closed by the time Steele signed her affidavit, and she believed, correctly, that it would never be filed in the case. Ordinarily, perjury and obstruction of justice cases are brought against witnesses who are guilty of some other crime and then take steps to conceal it. By expanding the obstruction of justice laws to indict witnesses who have committed no crime other than testifying in a way that the Office of the Independent Counsel doesn't find convincing, Starr has managed to confuse justice with himself.

THE LAW IS A surprisingly clumsy instrument for ferreting out the truth, but it seems especially at a loss when faced with sexual harassment allegations like Kathleen Willey's, where all the parties have changed their stories and where the line between legal and illegal activity turns on subjective reactions that are nearly impossible to verify. Everything about Willey's story is in dispute: what, precisely, transpired in her meeting with the president, how she felt about it, whom she told, and what she told them. Willey's claim that she was upset by her meeting with the president on the day her husband killed himself has been contradicted by at least two of the people she talked to about the meeting on the day it occurred. Linda Tripp encountered Willey as she was leaving the Oval Office, and, in her grand jury testimony, Tripp insisted that Willey welcomed the advance and later consulted Tripp about ways she might pursue an affair with the president. Willey called another friend, Harolyn Cardozo, after her meeting at the White House. According to an account by Thomas Oliphant in *The Boston Globe*, Cardozo told Starr's grand jury last April that Willey was pleased by the meeting and eager to see the president as much as she could, allegedly saying at one point that, if she played her cards right, she could be the Judith Exner of the 1990s.

As for Steele, she has a flighty, talkative manner that makes her shifting stories sometimes hard to follow. But it's hard to fathom any motive she would have had to turn her life upside down unless she believed, on some level, that she was telling the truth. "My own personal belief is that she was pressured," Kathleen Willey announced when she appeared on "60 Minutes" in March 1998. "I think that the White House wanted to try to discredit me, and they found a pawn in her." According to Steele, Willey told producers for "60 Minutes" that Steele was especially sensitive to charges that she had illegally adopted her eight-year-old son, Adam. Soon afterward, journalists and prosecutors began to investigate the theory that the White House had threatened to undo the illegal adoption unless Steele changed her story.

The rumors turned out to be unfounded as well as malicious. After her four-day-old son, Ben, died in 1990, Steele went to Romania, where she adopted the three-month-old Adam. To be especially meticulous, she formalized the adoption in Romania and Virginia. "As any idiot who's ever been to Romania or anybody knows—you tell me how you could get out of there with a child illegally," Steele says. "To suggest that anybody could possibly think of leaning on me, threaten me, is absolute nonsense. It didn't happen."

NEVERTHELESS, after the "60 Minutes" interview, Starr began to dispatch FBI agents to ask Steele's neighbors repeated questions about the adoption. He subpoenaed Steele's phone records, bank records, tax accountant and tax returns, her former lawyer, and former friends from around the country. In June, the associate independent counsel in charge of her case, David G. Barger, invited Steele to testify before a grand jury in Washington, D.C., and she agreed to do so after Barger assured her in writing that she was "not a target or a subject of this grand jury investigation" but was viewed instead "as a witness with potentially relevant information to provide to the grand jury." But, after Steele's grand jury appearance, she received another letter from Barger on August 3 informing her that her status had been changed from witness to subject. A few days later, Steele retaliated by going on "Larry King Live" to explain her position and to attack Starr. She also set up a legal defense fund to defray her mounting legal bills and a website to encourage contributions. Four days after her "Larry King" appearance, Barger summoned Steele to testify for a second time in Virginia rather than Washington. When she appeared before the Alexandria grand jury on August 18, she repeatedly asserted her Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination on her lawyer's advice, but she couldn't resist replying "yes" when Barger asked her whether her previous testimony about Kathleen Willey had been true. Barger relied on this response to support his decision to indict her for misleading a Virginia grand jury and to try her in the Virginia "Rocket Docket," where juries are far less forgiving than they are in Washington.

After the second grand jury appearance, Barger went into high gear, summoning Steele's brother and daughter and

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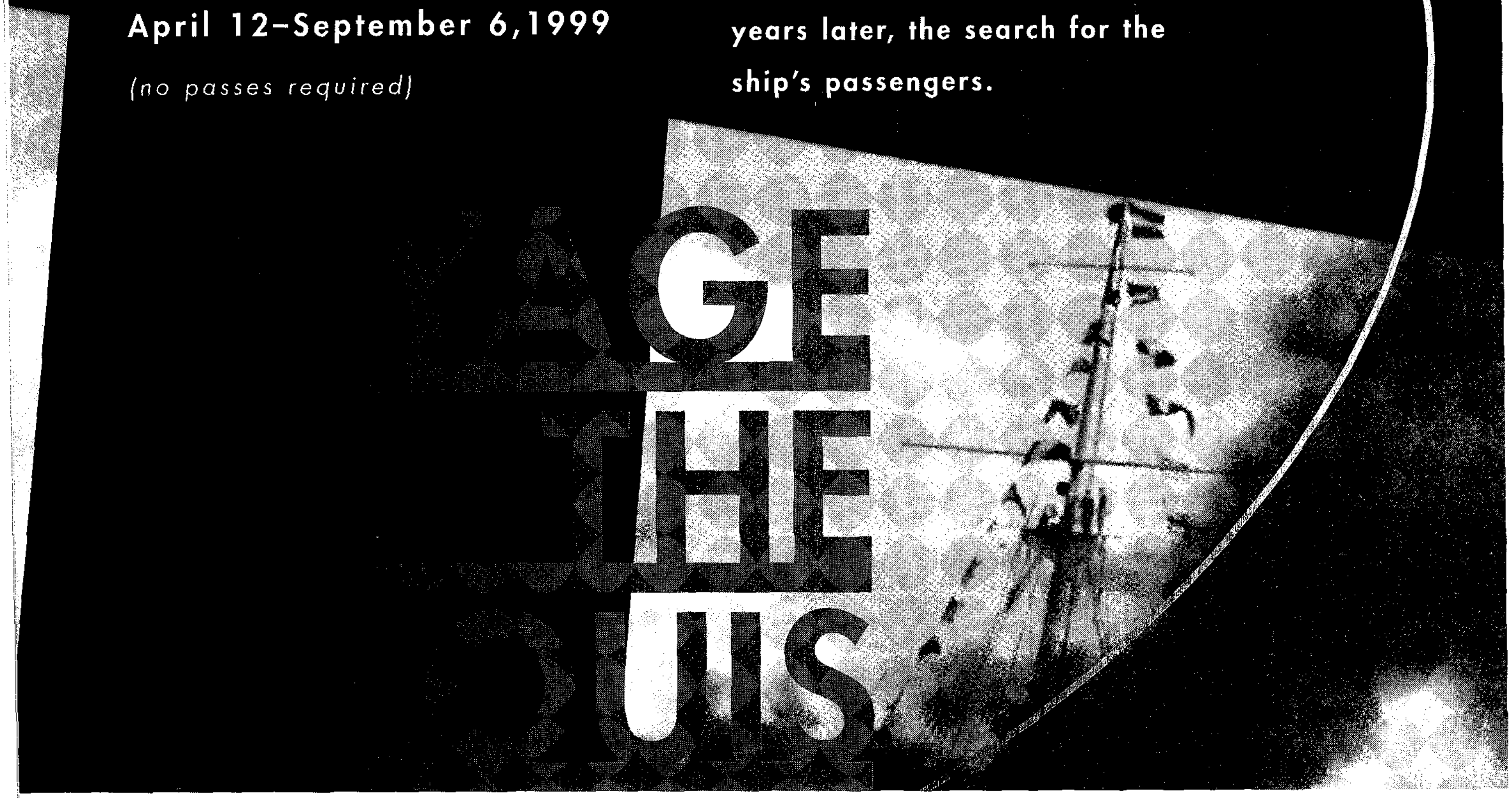

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Metro: Smithsonian (blue/orange line) 100 Raoul Wallenberg Place, SW, Washington, DC 20024 (202) 488-0400 questioning them about the legality of Steele's adoption. On November 4, Steele's lawyer, Nancy Luque, filed an ethical complaint with Janet Reno and with Starr, accusing Starr and Barger of "prosecutorial misconduct" based on, among other things, their questioning of Steele's daughter before the grand jury for more than five hours, their sending FBI agents door to door in Steele's neighborhood, and their forcing Steele to repeat her story in Virginia rather than Washington. (A spokesman for Starr's office refused to comment on Luque's allegations or on any aspect of the Steele case, citing a local rule in the Eastern District of Virginia prohibiting defense lawyers and prosecutors from making public statements that might "interfere with a fair trial.") Four hours after receiving the fax, Barger replied, "Do not assume that my failure at this time, to address your recent personal attacks on me suggests, in any way, that I believe those attacks have merit. They do not." He then demanded that Steele show cause why she shouldn't be indicted.

On November 19, Kenneth Starr appeared before the House Judiciary Committee. The only point in his testimony where he seemed to lose his composure was when he defended the investigation of Julie Steele in response to questions raised by the president's lawyer, David Kendall. "There is an enormous amount of misinformation and false information that is being bandied about with respect to [Steele] and the circumstances of questioning, and I will look for it at the appropriate time to be able to demonstrate that to any fair-minded person beyond any reasonable doubt," Starr told the Judiciary Committee. "Some of [Steele's] claims are ... utterly without merit and utterly without foundation, utterly without factual foundation." The day after Starr's appearance, Barger sent Steele a letter threatening to indict her.

Soon after, Steele met with Barger. "By the end of the meeting I was just sobbing," she told me. "'My God, what in the world could you be thinking?' I asked him. 'Could you tell me what possible motive I would have? Where is the upside of this? I guess I'm missing it. Could you explain to me what is my motive and exactly where do I come out with anything positive in this entire nightmare? Where would that be? And you're threatening me, my child, who means more to me than life itself. I mean, what in God's name are you thinking?'" Steele says that, as she tried to leave the room, in tears, Barger pulled on her arm and tried to stop her. "Don't leave like this," he said. "I have children, too." "That's the only glimpse of a human being that I've seen," Steele told me. "But then they turn right around and indict me."

THERE IS AN Alice in Wonderland quality to the indictment, which was issued on January 7. "Defendant STEELE affirmed in the grand jury that certain statements she made in her 'Larry King Live' interview ... were true when she knew they were false," the indictment declares. "In truth and in fact, as Defendant STEELE well knew and believed, Kathleen Willey told Defendant STEELE about the alleged sexual advances." Initially, the indictment seemed to identify Steele's statements to journalists, such as Michael Isikoff and Larry King, as separate examples of obstruction of justice. Barger denied that this was his intent, but, at the end of February, "in order to avoid any confusion on this point," as he put it, he asked Judge Claude M. Hilton to strike the disputed sections of the indictment. In its amended form, the indictment continues to list Steele's decision to provide the Virginia grand jury with a videotape of her "Larry King" interview, which she believed was covered by Barger's subpoena, as an example of obstruction of justice.

Even if Steele was mistaken about the scope of the subpoena, it seems irresponsible to prosecute her for obstructing justice on the grounds that she proclaimed her innocence on national television and then provided a videotape of her remarks to grand jurors. Traditionally, obstruction of justice prosecutions are reserved for those who destroy relevant evidence of their guilt rather than simply deny their guilt, as in the case of an American navigator whose plane severed ski lift cables in the Italian Alps and who was recently dismissed from the Marine Corps for obstructing justice after he burned his personal videotape of the flight.

THE HISTORICAL ROOTS of the Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination are shadowy and complicated, but there was a deeply held belief at the time of the American Founding that it was a form of moral torture to interrogate suspects under oath about their own guilt. Recognizing that all suspects are tempted to tell self-protective lies in their own defense, it was viewed as unacceptable to force them to choose between the "cruel trilemma" of self-incrimination, perjury, or contempt, each of which would send them to prison. This is what made the grand jury interrogation of President Clinton so unusual and unsettling—unlike other suspects, he wasn't free in practice to plead the Fifth—and what makes the indictment of Julie Steele unsettling on a different scale.

Because Kathleen Willey had already been granted immunity from prosecution at the time Steele was called before the Washington, D.C., and Virginia grand juries, it's not clear what Steele could illuminate for those grand juries, except whether or not Steele herself had lied. But, if that was what the prosecutors really wanted to know, they had no business encouraging Steele to repeat her story under oath and then indicting her for doing so. When historians look back on the Starr investigation, perhaps they will identify this as its most troubling legacy: placing people under oath, forcing them to discuss their most intimate thoughts and feelings on pain of perjury, and then threatening to imprison them for the compelled testimony that results. This, after all, is the central evil that the Fifth Amendment was designed to prevent.

Julie Hiatt Steele's story is so irrationally complicated that it seems presumptuous to suggest that the truth can be known beyond reasonable doubt. This is yet another reason why prosecutors are traditionally reluctant to use the perjury and obstruction of justice laws to plumb inconsistencies in the stories of marginal witnesses to hypothetical legal proceedings. "I thought I was on the periphery," Steele says. "I've never been to the White House. I don't know any of these people. It never crossed my mind that I was being followed or threatened. It's silly. It would make for a great comedy if it weren't for the fact that they're trying to put me in jail." ■

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Is globality sustainable?

Going to Market

By DANIEL YERGIN

GERHARD SCHROEDER may be Germany's chancellor, but Oskar Lafontaine—his first finance minister and the chairman of the newly elected Social Democratic Party—was supposed to be the power beside the throne. An old-fashioned anti-capitalist, "Red Oskar" was intent on raising taxes, reinforcing Germany's overblown welfare state, limiting competition, and humbling the new European Central Bank.

But, last month, he abruptly resigned from both posts. In the United States, the news did not even make the front page of most major newspapers. Yet Lafontaine's resignation is not just about German politics. It also illustrates the power of the new market consensus that is reshaping politics around the world: center-left parties—at least those that want to win elections—are accommodating themselves to the marketplace. This new formula has already been made familiar by the New Democrats in the United States and New Labour in Britain. Prime Minister Tony Blair and his Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown, for instance, seem no less Thatcherite in their economic policies than Margaret Thatcher herself, and Schroeder went out of his way to describe Blair as his own role model.

But is this shift irreversible? Or is it only a tide that will in due course run in the other direction? After all, while the Dow hovers near 10,000 in the United States, economies elsewhere have not exactly delivered stellar performances recently. We are still in the midst of a global financial contagion that has left much of Asia in a depression, caused Russia to drop out of the global economy, and left Brazil on the ropes. Last fall, the head of one of the major international financial institutions was heard to mumble something about the "end of global capitalism as we know it." And, just the other day, one senior U.S. policymaker remarked, "We're still knee-deep in the crisis."

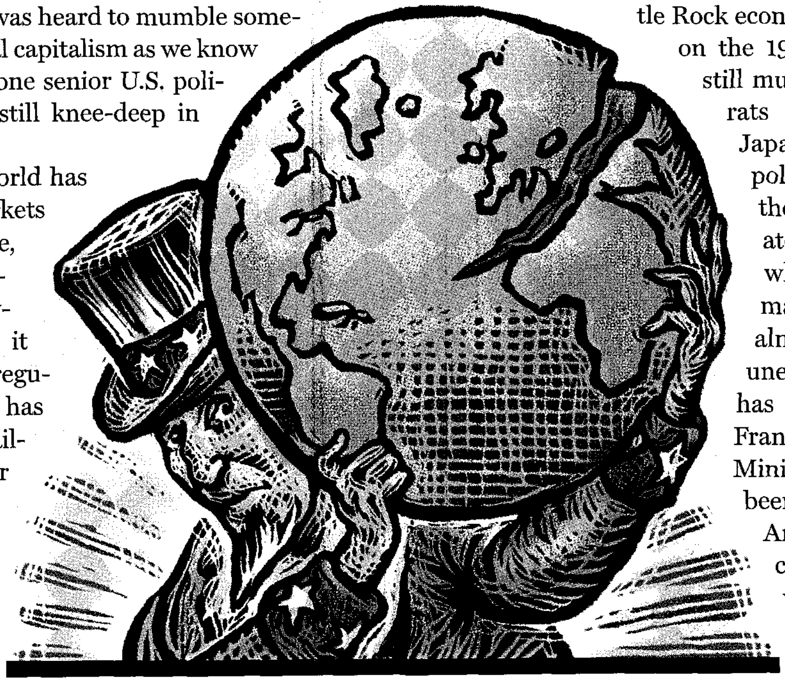
Yet the fact is that the world has changed its mind about markets and their workings. Before, the focus was on "market failure" and the ways that governments needed to fix it through nationalization or regulation. Today, the focus has shifted to "government failure"—what goes wrong or does not work very well when governments try to manage economic affairs directly. Almost everywhere, there is now a focus on fiscal prudence. Much of the world is now privatizing. In the United States, this shift has taken the form of deregulation—or at least a move to a sort of "regulation lite," with greater confidence in the ability of competition to protect consumers and the public weal.

The extent of the change is hard to overstate. Clinton's Deputy Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers recently observed that, whereas Milton Friedman "was the devil figure in my youth ... with time [I] have ... come to have large amounts of grudging respect. And, with time, increasingly ungrudging respect." Similarly, one of India's former central planners, now head of its privatization commission, describes how, "between the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, I felt as though I were awakening from a thirty-five-year dream. Everything I had believed about economic systems and had tried to implement was wrong."

This intellectual move to the market approach began as a response to the inflation, low growth, and regulatory rigidities that afflicted the industrial countries in the '70s and '80s. It is also a response to the inefficiencies and large losses run up by nationalized industries and by their difficulties in adapting to changing markets. The fall of the Red Star—the failure of Soviet communism—did much to undermine confidence in socialism, central planning, and five-year plans. Meanwhile, Latin America's debt crisis bankrupted not just the countries themselves but also the state-centered economic ideas that had governed them.

In addition, the success of the Asian miracle economies undercut standard-issue development ideas for the Third World. This may seem ironic in light of the past 21 months, but those countries were significantly more market-oriented than other Third World nations, and as a result they were soon significantly more successful. India and South Korea had similar per capita incomes at the beginning of the '60s. By the beginning of the '90s, Korea's was 15 times that of India.

Then there was the performance of the American economy in the '90s. Even at the time of the Little Rock economic summit, following on the 1992 election, there was still much talk among Democrats about the need for Japanese-style "industrial policies." In the years since, the United States has created 17 million new jobs, while France and Germany are wrestling with almost twelve percent unemployment and Japan has remained in its slump. France's Socialist Prime Minister Lionel Jospin has been vocal in his criticism of American-style "ultra-capitalism," but, when he visited Washington last year, he admitted that the United States



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must be doing something right in terms of economics.

The recent shift in thinking is anchored in broader changes toward what we've called "globality." In contrast to "globalization," which describes the process by which businesses expand into markets around the world, globality is what happens afterward. It is a condition, a situation, and a convergence of several forces. The first is the attitudinal change toward greater confidence in markets. The second is the continuing and rapid pace of economic integration. Cross-border trade and investment are growing much faster than economies themselves. Where countries once wanted to nationalize and expel multinational companies, they now compete for their investments—and the capital, technology, know-how, and access to markets that they bring. National borders are being eroded by trade agreements like NAFTA in North America and Mercosur in South America. Countries that used to have central planners now have stock markets.

THIS YEAR'S SYMBOL of integration was the euro, to which eleven sovereign countries have surrendered that most sovereign of rights—the right to issue currency. In Latin America, where the greenback used to stand for imperialism, some leaders are now suggesting that countries abandon their own currencies in favor of the dollar. (Alan Greenspan has indicated that the Federal Reserve is not exactly eager to shoulder responsibility for other countries' inflation and unemployment rates.)

Globality is also being created by the technologies that knot the world together—computers and the Internet, of course, but also cheap and omnipresent communications. At the same time, the convergence of economic integration and technology is turning shareholders and the capital markets into a force unto themselves. In the search for yield, the aggregated retirement and near-retirement savings of the industrial world vote constantly on countries' fiscal policies, inflation rates, and debts and deficits. These voters can be ignored, but at a cost. And, when they change their votes, the results can be ferocious, as the past 21-month period of economic contagion has demonstrated. Globality, in short, reduces the control that governments have over their own economies. That, in itself, drives the accommodation to the market.

The current global economic crisis could cause a shift in the consensus. It's had a devastating impact on millions. But is this a failure of markets—or of government? The problem in so many countries was that they did not have enough of the right kind of government regulation and that they had too much of the wrong kind of connections between governments and private sectors—in other words, crony capitalism. Initially, these countries' economic systems actually did a pretty effective job moving them up the economic ladder, but, as these up-and-comers became more integrated into the global economy, their economic systems became more and more inappropriate.

Unfortunately, the high growth rates in Asia caused many to brush off evidence of such underlying weaknesses in their systems. (Remember the trumpeting of "Asian values"?) Investors were mesmerized by those growth numbers. Yet the weaknesses were there, partly reflected in a deteriorating export performance. The gravest weakness was the mismatch between national financial systems and the surging capital markets. Enormous short-term debt built up. People borrowed to play currency games. There was little understanding of the debt levels. Every financial collapse seems to have its symbolic bankruptcy. In Asia, it was the fall of the high-flying Peregrine investment bank, which was brought down by its $270 million loan to a taxicab company in Jakarta that just happened to be closely affiliated with the eldest daughter of President Suharto. That was what crony capitalism was all about.

OVER THE PAST YEAR, there has been much debate about how to prevent future crises. Last fall, President Clinton called for a new international financial architecture, and we will hear more about that in the run-up to this June's G-7 summit in Cologne. Already, the grand architecture is being downsized into mundane, though still very valuable, additions to the existing house. These will include more disclosure, better quality analysis and financial regulation, better accounting standards (one of America's great exports), and the introduction of bankruptcy laws and other legal foundations to rein in patronage and corruption. Such measures are going to be imposed not through a new Bretton Woods meeting but rather through a lot of "consensus building" and add-ons to existing institutions—along with a good deal of peer pressure. The message countries will be hearing is that, if you want the benefits of the system, including stable investment flows, you have to play by its new rules.

But, if not the current economic crisis, what else could make the pendulum swing back from the consensus on the merits of the market system? Surely there will be a reaction if the market-oriented systems do not, over time, deliver economic growth, jobs, and a higher standard of living. Issues of fairness, equity, and social justice will loom large. No doubt, the public will also judge market systems by how well they meet environmental concerns. And demographic considerations—the growing elderly population in the industrial world—will create growing demands on both governments (for services) and markets (for retirement income).

But there are two nearer-term risks. One is the slowdown and lack of economic growth in much of the world. The United States accounted for two-thirds of all growth in the major industrial nations last year. That is not a healthy balance. With Europe now slowing, the imbalance could become even worse.

The other risk may be hidden in the innards of the American economy itself. "It is in the nature of markets, and probably ultimately in human nature," Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin recently observed, "to become ever more careless about adequately analyzing and weighing risk as good times continue."

He probably was not talking about Asia. ■

DANIEL YERGIN is coauthor of *The Commanding Heights: The Battle Between Government and Marketplace That is Remaking the Modern World* (Simon and Schuster) and chairman of Cambridge Energy Research Associates.

How capitalism redefines morality.

Value-free

By JOHN B. JUDIS

HARDLY A DAY GOES BY when we don't hear a politician, preacher, or pundit bemoaning the decline in the nation's morals. But it is not just Gary Bauer decrying the "virtue deficit." The *San Antonio Express-News* editorialized earlier this year: "The 1980s were known as the decade of self-indulgence and trickle-down economics. The 1990s will be known as the decade of moral decline." A *Washington Post* survey last August found that 78 percent of Americans believe that the "morals of young Americans have declined."

America has had its prophets of moral doom since the Pilgrims landed. But, interestingly, the current culture war is not about how extensively Americans are violating accepted moral standards but about what those standards should be. It's not whether teenagers are having sex but whether they think it is wrong to do so.

Morality is, of course, an elusive and difficult subject, but at the center of contemporary concerns about moral decline is a familiar complex of issues about work, leisure, sex, love, family, the role of women, the place of religion, and the importance of self-denial. Should the goal of life be to achieve happiness or to please God? Should the goal of work be to make as much money as possible or to improve the situation of one's fellow humans? Should divorce be discouraged? Should abortion be permitted? Should homosexuality be tolerated? Is morality based upon religion? These debates herald a time of national moral and religious transition.

America's moral flux can be explained, at least in part, by everything from the introduction of birth control pills to the rise in life expectancy. But the fundamental explanation has to do with the relationship—noted by both Karl Marx and Max Weber—between the moral imperatives economic life generates and our broader moral and religious beliefs. As this basic relationship has changed during the twentieth century, it has undermined traditional morality and religion, contributing to the moral uncertainty in which we now find ourselves. And the change hinges on the meaning of saving and self-denial.

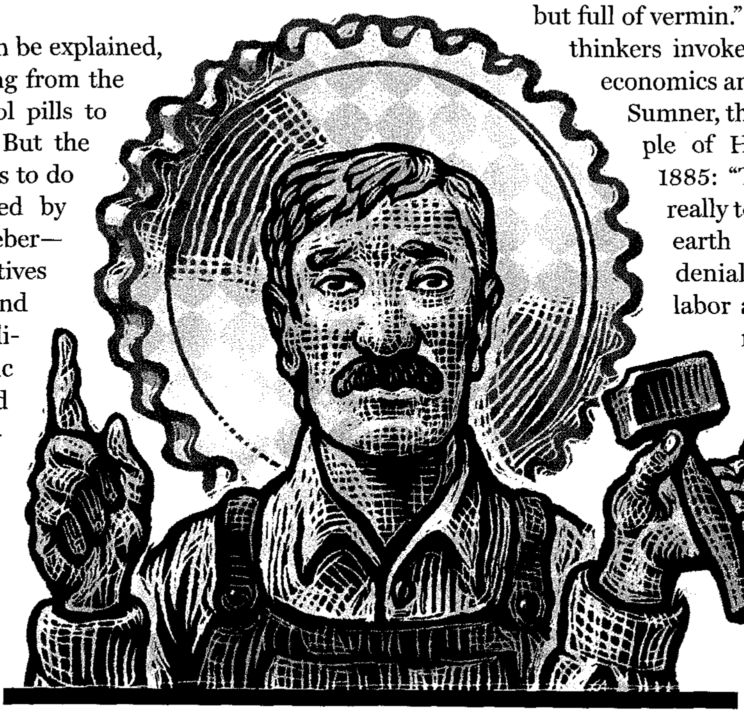


ILLUSTRATION BY BILL RUSSELL

From the 1850s through the early decades of the twentieth century, the United States experienced an industrial revolution. During this period of capital accumulation, businessmen didn't consume their profits; they saved them and invested them in new plants, machinery, and raw materials in order to produce more goods at a lower cost. The accumulation of capital depended on saving. In an 1889 textbook, Francis Walker, the president of MIT, wrote: "At every step of its progress capital follows one law. It arises solely out of saving. It stands always for self-denial and abstinence." And what applied to the businessmen's income also applied to workers' wages. If businessmen paid their workers more than a subsistence wage, businesses would not have sufficient profit to invest and expand production. Workers accepted this, and, in this sense, their self-denial was also essential to industrialization.

This system of production was seen to be normal and necessary, according to certain religious and moral precepts that were rooted in the dissenting Protestant denominations that dominated the Northern colonies. For these Protestant groups, the goal of life was salvation in the afterlife. Success in work was an indication that a person would be saved. The aim of work was not to accumulate riches per se but to contribute to God's glory. This meant accumulating, rather than spending, what one earned and expanding its value. Work itself was a means of purifying the self against the sinful pleasures of the body. Indulgence in bodily pleasures—from sex outside of procreation to social dancing—was a sin. Idleness was a temptation to sin. As John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, put it, "We must exhort all Christians to gain all they can and to save all they can."

These tenets became central to Americans' work ethic. In 1701, Cotton Mather enjoined his parishioners, "Away to your business, lay out your strength in it, put forth your skill in it." One hundred and fifty years later, Henry Ward Beecher warned that "the indolent mind is not empty, but full of vermin." Secular as well as religious thinkers invoked the connection between economics and morals. William Graham Sumner, the foremost American disciple of Herbert Spencer, wrote in 1885: "The only two things which really tell on the welfare of man on earth are hard work and self-denial (in technical language, labor and capital), and these tell most when they are brought to bear directly upon the effort to earn an honest living, to accumulate capital, and to bring up a family of children to be industrious and self-denying in their turn."

In the first half of the twentieth century, the sys-

Where We Stand

A commentary on public education and other critical issues

Making Standards Work

By SANDRA FELDMAN, President
American Federation of Teachers

For several years now, states have been working to introduce more rigorous academic standards for K-12 students, and standards-based reforms are beginning to get promising results. We're seeing upward trends in reading and math, especially in high-poverty schools, where standards-based reform is a condition of receiving federal Title I funds. To cite just one encouraging statistic, the reading level of nine-year-olds in these schools improved by nearly one grade level between 1992 and 1998.

This is good news. And it provides support for what the AFT has been saying all along—that setting higher standards and making schools and students accountable for reaching them will raise the achievement of *all* our students.

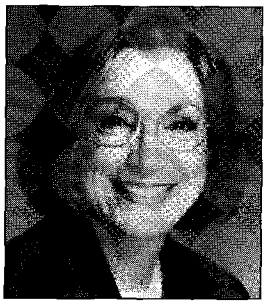
Teachers have always supported higher standards, but recently I've been hearing concerns about how some of the standards-based reforms are being handled. A number of teachers' criticisms seem well founded.

Too Big a Leap

For example, the New York State Regents exams have been a high standard for years, but since they were not required for graduation, many students did not take them. (Only 42 percent of graduating seniors got the Regents diploma in 1997.) By 2003, all New York high school students who want a diploma will not only have to pass five Regents exams in core subjects; they will be taking new, tougher versions of these exams.

This could be a good idea, but there's a wrinkle. For some students—those already doing well—this double leap will be a challenge, but not a major problem. But how will students who would not have passed the *old* Regents meet this new and more difficult requirement? They need extra help and plenty of it—tutoring and Saturday and summer classes—and they need it now. The price tag may be high, but if the resources can't be found to bring these youngsters up to speed, the new standards won't help the students who need help most; they'll make the kids' prospects far worse.

New York City's District 2 shows one way of helping students meet high standards that works. For about eight years, District 2 has implemented a successful literacy program that provides sustained, high-quality professional development for teachers and individualized help for kids who need it. It has gotten excellent results with all children but especially with those who were having big problems becoming proficient readers. Preparing underachieving students for the Regents—and enabling them to succeed—will require similar ingredients; it will take time and plenty of extra help for the students (and their teachers).



When kids are behind, they need help, not the "just-do-it" approach.

Another success story is North Carolina, where all students, especially low-performing students, have made significant gains on both state and national tests—without leaving disadvantaged children behind. Reformers made sure that curricula and textbooks were in line with the standards for what students are supposed to know. Exams were closely linked with those standards. And the state made additional resources available to schools with a high percentage of disadvantaged students.

None of this happened overnight or without a struggle—it has taken nearly ten years of sustained effort in which successive state administrations, both Republican and Democrat, have participated. North Carolina isn't done yet: Standards are not yet adequate for some grades and subjects. But the results, thus far, speak for themselves. Similar efforts to raise standards have met with some success in Texas as well.

America's public schools are on the move; they're demanding more of students, and many kids are meeting the new challenges. But it's not enough to set tougher standards and tell students, "OK, now meet them! Sink or swim!"—which is what seems to be happening in some places. That "just-do-it" attitude might work for youngsters who are able to shape up on their own. It's a recipe for disaster with students who are having a hard time meeting the old—and less demanding—standards.

Time to Get on Board

Teachers are saying plainly that they, too, need help—more and better training, extended instruction time for students, a *sustained* effort that they and the children and their parents can count on. Some states have built this help into their standards programs, and some individual school districts are responding as well; but everyone needs to get on board, including the U.S. Congress.

A few weeks ago, Congress voted down funding that would assist schools in providing summer and after-school programs, as well as other forms of help. That was partisanship rearing its ugly head again. The standards movement is a reform that's working. Members of both parties need to get behind it. ▮

***Where We Stand* is published once every month in *The New Republic*. To comment, write to Sandra Feldman, AFT, 555 New Jersey Ave. N.W., Washington, DC 20001. © Sandra Feldman 1999. Visit our web site (http://www.aft.org).**

tem of production that this Protestant work ethic sustained was utterly transformed. From 1900 to 1930, industrial productivity rose about twice as fast as it did from 1870 to 1900, largely because of the introduction of scientific management and the replacement of steam power by electricity. By the 1920s, as historian Martin Sklar has documented, it had become possible to increase output while decreasing the total number of workers engaged in goods production. During the '20s, overall manufacturing output increased 64 percent, but the number of manufacturing workers dropped by 300,000. This changed the role of saving.

WHY? THE INDUSTRIAL revolution depended upon the fact that both consumer goods workers and their employers would lay aside a certain portion of those goods (in the form of wages and profits, respectively) to be consumed by new workers hired to produce machines and other capital goods. In the '20s, however, it became possible to expand the production of consumer goods without increasing the number of workers engaged in goods production. In fact, the number of capital goods workers actually fell during the '20s, from 3.3 million to 2.9 million. This meant that goods producers no longer had to lay aside an additional part of their income for new workers. They no longer had to save as much as they had saved before.

By way of analogy, imagine an office in 1985 that produced greeting cards on a mini-computer that cost $50,000 and required several trained technicians to operate. Seven years later, the company could have taken a small percentage of the money it had put away to replace that machine and bought a new computer for $5,000 that would produce more cards with much less expensive labor. There would be no new net investment, merely the replacement of an older machine with a new one. If you imagine such a process taking place in the economy as a whole, you can get some idea of how the American economy changed in the '20s.

A similar paradox affected workers' self-denial. In the nineteenth century, wages had to be kept down to provide profits to invest in the newly growing capital goods industries. The growth of these industries required new workers who created new demand for consumer goods, which caused the consumer goods industries to make new investments, reigniting the process of accumulation. But, in the '20s, the process broke down because, again, the capital goods sector stopped growing. When new workers weren't hired, new demand for consumer goods dwindled. Consumer goods industries became so productive that they reduced the demand for their own goods every time they expanded production.

This created a crisis of overproduction that contributed to the depth and persistence of the Depression in the 1930s. Rising productivity led to an accumulation of profits that, in the absence of new investment outlets, found its way into the overvalued stock market. Workers' self-denial resulted not in new investment but in a lack of effective demand for the goods they produced. It was what Keynes called the "fallacy of saving."

In the early '30s, many Americans feared that capitalism had become obsolete and that there was no way to overcome the threat of overproduction that the new productivity had created. They were wrong: American capitalism recovered and flourished for the next 60 years by creating new outlets for investment and new demand for the goods that were produced. But these measures also undermined the foundations of the older Protestant work ethic.

The government subsidized both consumer demand and the demand for capital goods through welfare programs, public works, guaranteed loans for housing, highway construction, and military spending. Businesses acceded to wage increases and used various forms of easy consumer credit to encourage spending. Advertising also exploded, especially after the introduction of television. But, more important, businesses vastly expanded into realms that had been either unexplored or previously reserved for upper-class luxuries. They now sold fun and leisure and mental and physical health to the working class; they marketed not merely edible food but gourmet delights and prepackaged and frozen food. They sold fashion and not merely clothes.

They sold these new goods and services through advertising, but the advertising itself had to create new needs and a new conception of what Americans should want to have and want to be. Advertising, along with popular entertainment, promoted the idea of a new American quite unlike the older American of the Protestant work ethic. For this new American, the goal of life was not salvation in the afterlife but happiness now. The goal of work was a comfortable and pleasurable life for yourself and for your family. Physical pleasure, through sex, sports, social activity, entertainment, and eating was an integral part of happiness. Leisure was a reward for having worked, and the enjoyment of leisure was an important part of happiness.

THE OLDER LIFE had been based on saving and self-denial; the new one was based on spending and self-fulfillment—the "good life." In the '60s, Americans began to look for the right "lifestyle." The older American had inherited his identity; the new American chose his identity, constructed his appearance (through diet, fashion, and cosmetics), created a personality (through education and even psychotherapy), and selected a career. One achieved happiness by choosing the right lifestyle.

This obsession with lifestyle has been reflected in the books Americans have read. For the past three decades, the nonfiction best-seller lists have been dominated by books explaining how to achieve happiness through adopting a certain lifestyle—from Thomas A. Harris's *I'm OK–You're OK* to Nancy Friday's *My Mother, My Self* down to Stephen Covey's *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* to Suze Orman's current best-seller, *The Courage to be Rich.*

Orman, who has become a superstar on public television, tells her own story of achieving the good life. After working for seven years as a waitress after college, she decided to get a job as a stockbroker. "I remember how proud my mom was when, years later, I was able to buy my first luxury car," she writes. She then decided to start her own financial group, but, after only a year, someone stole all her client records. She went deeply into debt. She then describes a Bunyanesque "turning point" in her life. Sitting in a Denny's restaurant, she "looked closely at the woman waiting on me, and it dawned that she surely had more money than I did. I might have looked richer, wearing my designer clothes and with my fancy car parked outside. But I knew that the only wealth that I had at this point was a negative, drawn in red ink. Looking again, I could see clearly that this waitress was also happier than I was, and more honest. I was the poor one, inside and out. Where would I find the courage I needed, the courage to change?"

In the standard Christian tale, the rich man realizes that the beggar is more virtuous and will be rewarded in the afterlife. But, in Orman's morality tale, both virtue and the promise of eternal life have disappeared. What Orman realizes is that her wealth is superficial because her business is in arrears and that the waitress actually has more money than she does and is therefore happier. Orman's "fancy car" couldn't bring her happiness because the bank still owned it. Seized with this insight into her true condition, she rebuilds her business—a business that consists of telling people how to manage their Roth IRAs—and regains the "courage to be rich."

The new capitalism has transformed religion itself into primarily a social and therapeutic activity. Shorn of its promise of otherworldly salvation, religion has become a lifestyle strategy—from Norman Vincent Peale's 1952 best-seller, *The Power of Positive Thinking*, to televangelist Robert H. Schuller's best-selling 1988 guide to making it, *Success is Never Ending, Failure is Never Final.* Last year, the host of a sports talk show was questioning a Dallas Cowboys representative about whether star player Deion Sanders's newfound commitment to religion was simply another "fad" that he was embracing. The rep became indignant at this slight to Sanders. "Being a Christian," he explained to the incredulous host, "has become Deion's lifestyle."

THE "CULTURE WAR" of the past decades has pitted descendants of the movements of the '60s against conservative Republicans and members of the religious right. It has had all the trappings of the final battle between good and evil on Armageddon, but it is really being fought on the much more prosaic terrain of modern capitalism. The two sides have much in common. They share not only a goal of worldly success but also a rejection of the purely individual strategy for salvation favored by Orman or Covey. They stand for visions of the good society and not simply the good life.

The counterculture of the '60s was part of the new capitalism but was also a reaction to the form it had taken after World War II. It fused cultural experimentation with politics: the search for the good life with the crusade for a good society. It featured communes, widespread use of drugs, and sexual liberation, but it also gave rise to the feminist, environmental, and consumer movements. The feminist movement was an attempt to secure not merely economic equality but equal opportunity to define one's existence; the environmental and consumer movements aimed to include safe cars and healthy food and clean air and water in the definition of the good life.

The religious right was descended from the Fundamentalists and Pentecostals of the early twentieth century who counseled Christians to save themselves before the world's end. These early Fundamentalists represented the last stand of the old Protestantism. Today's religious activists of the Christian Coalition have become worldly in their aims. They seek not to save their own souls but to reform present-day America. And they have expanded their own purview from restoring prayer in public school to cutting capital gains taxes.

Though not a fundamentalist Christian himself, William Bennett illustrates the trend. Bennett (like Orman) embraces the older virtues for newer ends. In *The Spirit of America*, for instance, he touts frugality as a virtue, but not for the same reasons that Wesley did. "In our modern age of easy credit and consumer debt, of great affluence and great decadence," he writes, "it is important to recall that industry and frugality are the sources not only of material success but of good and satisfactory living as well."

If you look at this culture war not from the perspective of the moment but from the sweep of two centuries, it looks like a family quarrel. One could imagine the adherents of the counterculture and the religious right as passengers in a spaceship furiously debating which direction it should go, when, unbeknownst to them, it is primarily being directed from below by remote control. Its overall direction is already mapped out. The best that the critics can do is steer it to the right or the left.

SO, DOES THE REPLACEMENT of the older Protestant work ethic represent a decline in morality, as some conservatives insist? I would suggest that it is far preferable to worry about how to achieve happiness on earth than to tolerate unhappiness and even misery in the pursuit of an imagined afterlife. It is also a decided advance that the average citizen can now take advantage of activities and opportunities once reserved for a wealthy few—like travel, education, psychotherapy, athletics, and preventive medicine. Most Americans can now enjoy the aesthetic dimension of fine clothes and food. And they can participate in sexual activities that were formerly performed secretly under a burden of crippling guilt.

Within this given framework, one can still find ample room for questioning whether certain kinds of behavior represent, if not a decline in morality, a departure from it. These include not simply obvious examples of criminal behavior but also the egregious pursuit of luxury that Robert Frank documents in his new book, *Luxury Fever*—from face-lifts to castles in the Hamptons—and the rabid intolerance of social differences (yes, lifestyles!) that is fueled by Bauer, Pat Buchanan, and others who claim the mantle of God. One can also find justification for encouraging social rather than purely individual solutions to the achievement of the good life—an objective that liberal and Christian right movements share but that they seek to achieve in very different ways. What is at stake is not the decline of morality but its redefinition—a process in which all Americans, from born-again to New Age to agnostic, are already participating. ■

How the affluent got an exemption in the war on crime.

Run-on Sentencing

By GREGG EASTERBROOK

SOMETHING HAD TO BE done about crime, and something has emphatically been done. Since 1985, the prison population has doubled, with almost two million Americans currently incarcerated. Three-strikes statutes and "mandatory minimum" laws are imposing serious time for convictions, from five years for petty drug possession to life for some nonviolent acts. And, as policing has improved, so, too, has the efficiency of prosecution. The guilty man who walks free has become the spectacular exception: federal prosecutors are now obtaining convictions in 89 percent of felony arrests. No longer can America be considered soft on crime. Streets are safer as a result, and, considering the runaway crime of the 1980s, this is a far-reaching, positive accomplishment.

But there is a cost. A woman receives a 21-year sentence for selling $25 worth of crack. A man named Earl Budd Jr., whom the sentencing judge calls "as much a threat to society as my eight-year-old grandson," gets six-and-a-half years for one packet of drugs. A California man with two prior convictions gets 25-to-life for his third strike—stealing a pizza. A foolish 18-year-old named Nicole Richardson, whose boyfriend had been dealing drugs, gets ten years for a telephone conversation in which she told a buyer where to find him. A Kansas mother of two named Gloria Van Winkle, guilty of minor brushes with the law but never of harming anyone, gets life imprisonment for possessing $40 worth of drugs. An Alabama roofing contractor named Douglas Gray, with indiscretions on his record but never a day in jail, gets life for a single purchase of a pound of pot.

Congressional and civic leaders, business executives, opinion-makers, and the larger group of affluent Americans ensconced in the better suburbs or city districts have been reading horror stories such as these in recent years, and, by all indications, they have not been moved. For the top quarter of the income distribution scale, the valid need to fight crime seems to have merged with indifference to the suffering of those being excessively punished. Perhaps there is a straightforward reason for this—it is mainly the disenfranchised who are being hammered by the new laws. In state and federal courtrooms across the nation, one sees people from working-class or average backgrounds getting harsh

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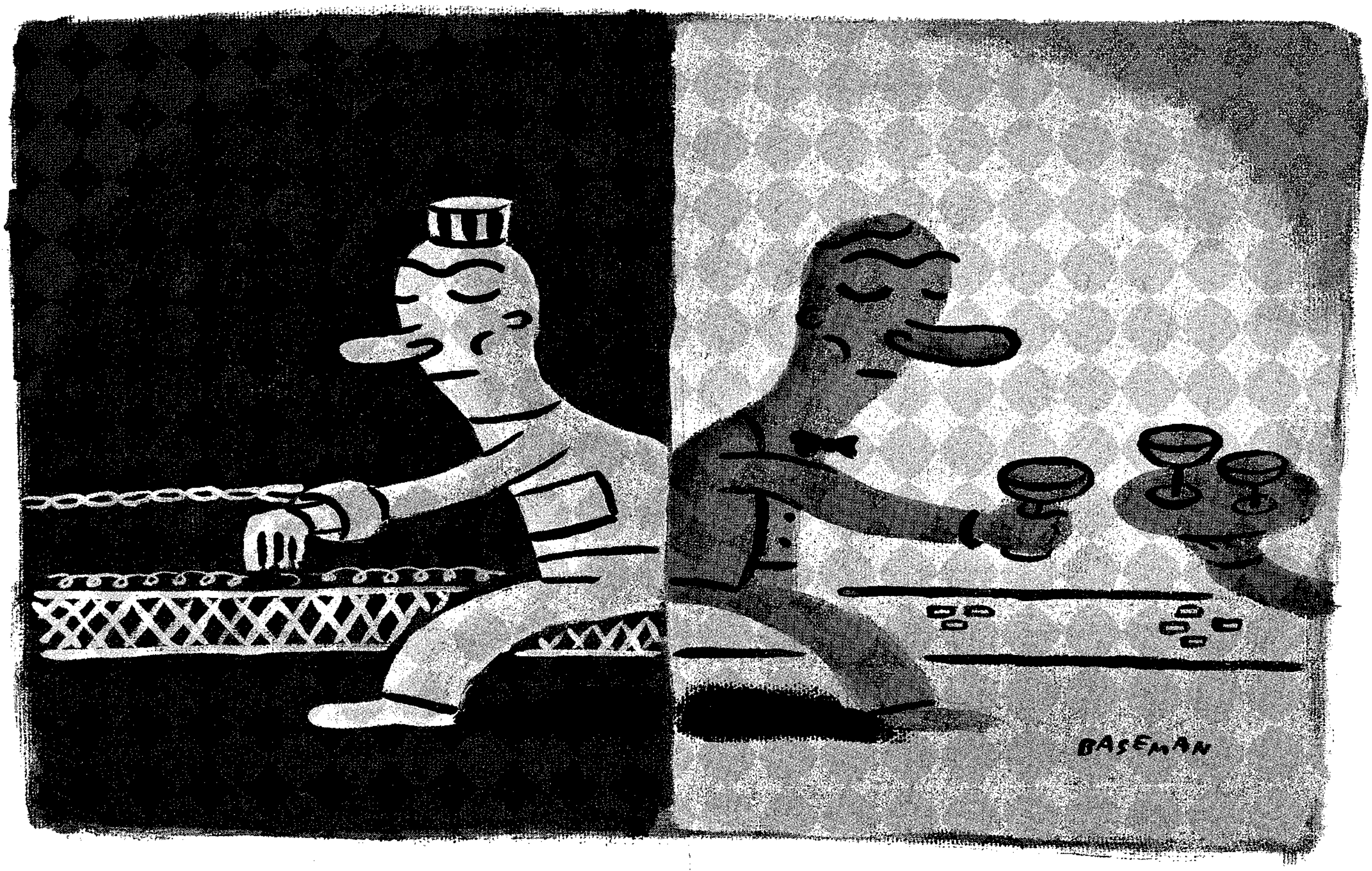

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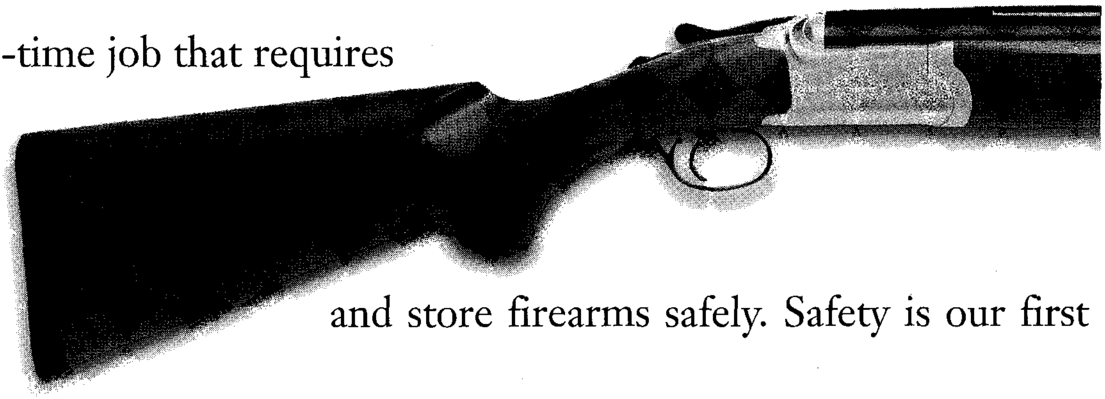

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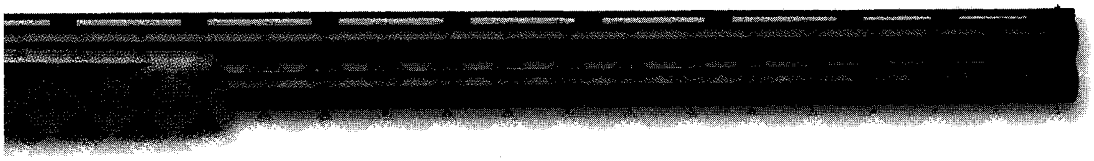

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penalties for minor drug offenses in case after case. What you don't see are persons of privilege, who, even if they commit drug offenses, can often arrange to keep themselves out of felony jeopardy and, hence, jail.

Stanley Sporkin, a federal judge in Washington, D.C., recently told a congressional committee of having no choice under new regulations but to sentence a working-class first-time drug offender to ten years. "If this person were from a different socioeconomic background, he would have gone to the Betty Ford Clinic for sixty to ninety days" and served no time, Sporkin said. The charge would have been finessed long before any judge was drawn in.

The threat of prison has become to the '90s what the draft was during most of the Vietnam years—a burden for the typical person from which the elite are nearly exempt. Just as sons of laborers and secretaries were drafted while sons of lawyers and businessmen took shelter in universities, today those of average means who cross paths with the law become crime-crackdown statistics while those with good jobs or social contacts have less to fear when a police officer knocks at the door. During the Vietnam years, American society pronounced itself willing to accept any cost to oppose communism, but, if that had been really so, the affluent would have borne an equal share of the combat sacrifice. Now, in the war on drugs and crime, society has pronounced itself willing to impose any level of punishment to stop lawbreaking. If that were really so, the affluent would be as likely to be jailed as the average, and that is not happening.

OF COURSE, the majority of crimes have always been committed by the poor or the working class, and thus one expects to find them overrepresented in jails. But "since about 1980 with the war on crime, there has been a shift. Federal prisons have become far more working-class," says Marc Mauer, assistant director of the Sentencing Project, a nonprofit group. According to the most recent statistics, the majority of U.S. prisoners did hold jobs in the year before their arrest, but only ten percent had incomes above $25,000, which was roughly the U.S. adult per capita income for the survey year. In other words, 90 percent made less than the U.S. average. Only 15 percent of state-prison inmates had attended a year or more of college, while for the population as a whole the figure is 45 percent. The college factor here is especially telling. One of the virtues of college is that it helps people get ahead in society, and those who do well are less likely to break laws. But college is reacquiring the status it enjoyed in the '60s as a source of exemption—then against the draft, today against the likelihood of harsh punishment for minor crimes, especially those involving drugs.

People who do have jobs but don't make much, and didn't get past high school, are pretty much the definition of working class: they are what the burgeoning prison population has become. The sheer magnitude of the increase is breathtaking. The prison population has tripled since 1980, from about 600,000 to about 1.8 million. This is six times the figure of 1972, when only 300,000 were behind bars. Almost 1,000 new jails and prisons have been built to house this influx: California, for example, has built 21 new prisons since 1984, versus one new university campus. Prisons now cost society about $35 billion per year, or roughly double the national welfare budget. As Eric Schlosser has written, today California alone "holds more inmates in its jails and prisons than do France, Great Britain, Germany, Japan, Singapore, and the Netherlands combined," though those nations combined have ten times California's population.

MOST OF THE prison boom is caused by nonviolent offenses, and mostly for drug convictions. Two decades ago, federal prisons held almost twice as many violent offenders as drug offenders; today, those serving drug time outnumber violent criminals by three to one in federal penitentiaries. Schlosser has further written, "More people are now incarcerated in the nation's prisons for marijuana possession than for manslaughter or rape." According to a study by Human Rights Watch, one of every four drug convicts has been imprisoned for nonviolent, simple possession, usually of minute quantities. Drug possession is often easier to prove than responsibility for acts of violence, so prosecutors sometimes rightly use drug laws as a means to send up dangerous criminals who might elude other attempts at conviction. But, given the magnitude of the imprisonment boom, it is inevitable that many harmless or only slightly culpable men and women are being swept up, too. A recent study of New York state drug inmates showed that 78 percent had no prior convictions for violent felonies and that almost half had never even been arrested on a charge of violence.

Some of the incarceration increase is attributable to putting genuinely dangerous criminals behind bars, where they belong. If that means more prisons and higher costs, so be it. There is no doubt that, until laws were changed in the mid-'80s, the system was often frighteningly permissive regarding violent crime. One of many ghastly examples was a 1982 rampage for which a gang of five New York men were ultimately convicted of 822 counts of rape, attempted murder, assault, and robbery. Yet none received a life sentence; three of the five are already eligible for release. And some new laws take white-collar crime more seriously: today, embezzlers and tax evaders face a greater risk of hard time than in years past, a change that can jeopardize the well-off.

Still, if lengthy sentences are appropriate to punish those who cause great harm or to isolate those who have shown they pose a danger to society, they are less useful as crime deterrents. Criminology generally shows that it is the likelihood of being caught and convicted—not the severity of sentences—that deters crime. Thus, improved policing, more determined prosecution, and such legal changes as the "good faith" exception to evidence exclusion (today it is rare for an obviously guilty person to get evidence suppressed in court) do help deter crime by causing criminals to know they are likely to pay for their crimes. Sentences per se don't have a similar deterrent effect. When long sentences are imposed for minor, nonviolent transgressions, the pendulum swings from too little punishment to too much.

But, since this pendulum now has swung mainly toward the poor and working class, the enfranchised rarely worry. They know that "it is a nearly universally held opinion that

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the well-to-do accused will escape the harshest sanctions of criminal law," says Eric Sterling, head of the Criminal Justice Policy Foundation and former counsel to the Senate Judiciary Committee. Opinion-makers and affluent suburbanites benefit from crime reduction but pay little price in terms of sons, daughters, or neighbors incarcerated. From the standpoint of the upper middle class, the crime crackdown is almost all dividend: the more sleazy people taken off the street and locked away the better, and who cares whether they really deserved as bad as they got.

SEVERAL OVERLAPPING LEGAL TRENDS have driven the imprisonment boom. One is the "guideline" sentence. Until recently, judges had great leeway in determining punishments. Results were often unfair, so Congress created the U.S. Sentencing Commission, which in 1987 published a point-scale system of crime types and penalties that judges must now use to calculate uniform sentences. Since 1987, federal judges have had relatively little discretion and can "depart downward" from the guideline only in some cases. This makes sentences less arbitrary. But it also means that judges must sometimes impose lengthy hard time even if there's no evidence a convicted person threatens society.

Another development is much harsher sentences for drugs. New York began the trend in 1973, when Governor Nelson Rockefeller won enactment of laws mandating years of jail time for small quantities of drugs and up to life imprisonment for trafficking. Today, critics attribute those laws to a cynical attempt by Rockefeller to macho-up his image for a 1976 presidential bid. But today the late-'60s heroin plague is forgotten, in part because strict laws hampered the pusher business. This was a vital accomplishment.

The problem is that harsh sentencing laws have acquired a political life of their own and have been extended even to marijuana, whose public-health significance is not meaningfully different from alcohol's. Most politicians are now terrified of any suggestion that some sentences are too harsh, fearing the charge of being soft on crime. George Pataki, New York's governor, initially said he would ask for repeal of the parts of the Rockefeller laws that cause nonviolent offenders to be jailed for minor possession. This winter, Pataki backtracked, saying the laws should stay in place. The political calculus shows that the most active voting blocs—suburbanites, the affluent, and senior citizens—want punitive crime measures since they presume they won't be affected. And the imprisoned—well, in most cases, once you're a felon, you *can't* vote, so why should politicians give a hoot about you?

During the '80s, many states enacted harsh drug-sentencing rules modeled on the Rockefeller laws. Fifteen states today have statutes that impose life sentences not just for trafficking in cocaine or LSD but for selling marijuana. Broad state enactment of Rockefeller-style drug laws explains why about 130,000 Americans—nearly the total national prison population of the '50s—are now jailed for simple possession of narcotics. As Timothy Egan has written, "Americans do not use more drugs, on average, than people from other nations; but the United States, virtually alone among Western democracies, has chosen a path of incarceration for drug offenders." In 1986, Congress took the Rockefeller drug laws national, enacting statutes that allow drug crimes to be prosecuted in federal as well as state courts, and imposing brutal sentences.

MOST POLICY ATTENTION to the 1986 law has fallen on its "100 to one" clause, which treats crack 100 times more harshly than powder cocaine. Possession of five grams of crack cocaine—a fairly small amount—triggers a five-year sentence, while 500 grams of powder cocaine is necessary to invoke the same sentence threshold. This rule has become notorious because it affects blacks disproportionately: most crack defendants are black; most powder cocaine defendants are white. But the more basic bias in the law is class-based: crack cocaine is cheaper than powder cocaine. Sons and daughters of senators or university presidents or newspaper editors are likely to buy the much-higher-status powder cocaine. By jailing people for possession of small crack amounts but not small powder amounts, the law now inherently targets the working class and poor at the expense of the moneyed. And not just blacks: Gloria Van Winkle, the Kansas working mother sentenced to life for small-time crack possession, is white.

More generally, the 1986 law simply imposes too much time for small offenses, applying the same no-punishment-is-too-harsh ethic to all crimes, horrific or piddling. The person caught holding a tiny amount of drugs is treated like the person caught holding a bloody knife. As Richard A. Posner, a federal appeals court judge and a conservative Ronald Reagan appointee, has recently said, "Prison terms in America have become appallingly long, especially for conduct that, arguably, should not be criminal at all," meaning nonviolent possession of small drug quantities. A 1994 Department of Justice study showed that 36 percent of federal drug inmates are "low-level offenders" with "minimal criminal histories" but serve an average of almost six years in prison.

"Long, mandatory sentences for significant drug traffickers are one thing, but rules like five years for possession of five grams of crack are morally abhorrent," says Frank Bowman, a law professor at Gonzaga University and a former federal prosecutor who has won many convictions under the new drug statutes. "To honor the law," Bowman says, "you end up pounding the stuffing out of folks who don't exactly remind anyone of Pablo Escobar."

In recent years, state and federal crimes have also come under the aegis of mandatory-minimum sentencing, which means a fixed minimum jail time regardless of extenuating circumstances. Mandatory minimums are not the same thing as guideline sentences, but the two interact in nefarious ways, sometimes making sentencing disproportionate to the severity of crimes. Today, under New York law, conviction for selling two ounces of cocaine will bring at least 15 years in prison; rape may bring as little as five.

That mandatory minimums and sentencing guidelines have interacted in untoward ways is "a good example of the law of unintended consequences," in the words of Supreme Court Chief Justice William Rehnquist—never known as particularly soft on crime. A 1994 survey by the Federal Judi-

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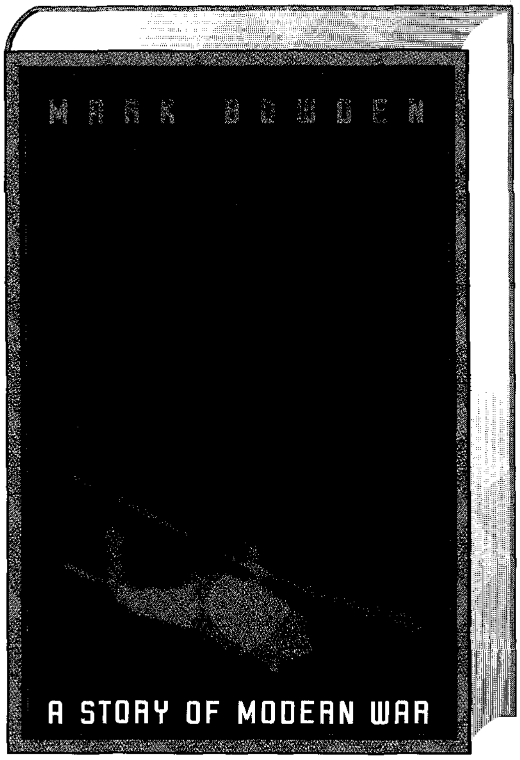

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cial Center showed that 86 percent of federal trial judges want Congress to restore their discretion to reduce sentences that are too harsh, while 70 percent think most mandatory sentences should be repealed. The presence of such large majorities suggests that many Republican-appointed judges favor sentencing reform. Myron Bright, a federal appeals court judge, recently decried in a bench dissent "sentences [that] are excessively long but required by the mandatory-minimum sentencing provisions and the overlaying requirements of the federal sentencing guidelines. These unwise sentencing policies which put men and women in prison for years not only ruin lives of prisoners and often their family members but also drain the American taxpayers of funds which can be measured in billions of dollars." In 1998, two of the eleven federal circuits issued rulings asserting a power to reduce sentences more or less unilaterally. The rulings didn't stand but did suggest some of the depth of judicial distress with the current sentencing regime.

Finally, federal law and some states have abolished parole for many crimes, meaning that, even if a convicted person demonstrates rehabilitation, punishment continues anyway. Abolition of parole is extremely popular politically because it targets the Willie Hortons of the world. But no-parole terms for nonviolent offenders seem vindictive, a torment imposed upon the disenfranchised by the comfortably established. And, without parole, it's hard for the law enforcement system to undo its own mistakes.

THE RECENT ALTERATIONS to criminal procedure coalesce into an unofficial but potent transformation: in most cases, it is now prosecutors, not judges or juries, who make the basic determinations about an accused person's fate. And, while judges and juries cannot be lobbied, prosecutors can. The chance to lobby the prosecutor hardly guarantees that an affluent person won't sink into legal trouble; sometimes, prosecutors go out of their way to enforce the law against those who abuse privilege. But, in the main, this factor is much more likely to help the upper quarter than the lower.

Suppose you're arrested on a charge of unlawful reconstitution of orange juice. Unless police make a flagrant error in the gathering of evidence, your destiny is now in the hands of prosecutors. First comes the basic question of whether you will be pursued in state or federal court. Federal sentences are usually longer, and federal prosecutors highly skilled, so chances are you would rather not square off against the U.S. attorney. (Some crimes can be prosecuted in only one jurisdiction; drug offenses and a few others may go to either state or federal courts.) What carefully constructed, publicly accountable system decides whether you face a state charge or the more severe federal penalty? None. It's strictly up to the prosecutor to decide whether he or she is interested. Such decisions are made for a wide range of reasons. Perhaps the earnest U.S. attorney worries that a dangerous offender might escape blundering local prosecutors. (If the feds could have taken jurisdiction over the O.J. case, he'd be where he belongs today.) Or perhaps a politically ambitious U.S. attorney wants to nail skins to the wall for reasons of personal promotion.

Once the venue of prosecution has been chosen, the next question is what you will be charged with. The prosecutor might select interstate flight for unlawful reconstitution, the worst version of your crime, carrying a life sentence. Then again, he or she might file for reconstitution in the presence of a minor, which confers only ten years, or merely charge you with possession of pulp with intent to reconstitute, for which the penalty is a fine. Exactly how the prosecutor decides to charge you is important because, if you're convicted, guidelines and mandatory minimums will dictate your time. Regardless of whether the judge thinks your sentence is appropriate or a miscarriage of justice, off to the clink you go.

Then you have to decide whether to plead guilty or take your chances at a trial. Today, 93 percent of federal convictions are obtained on guilty pleas, for reasons from indisputable guilt, when there's no doubt the accused committed the crime, to lack of funds for defense, to the agreement to serve time on a lesser charge to avoid being convicted of the maximum at trial. Simultaneously comes the question of whether or not you will give the government "substantial assistance" in catching others. Under the new regime, the primary way a federal criminal defendant can win a reduction of prison time is by supplying information. In return, the prosecutor files a motion that the judge employs to invoke a formula awarding a reduction of your sentence.

DISCOUNTING SENTENCES FOR information is fine when prosecutors use this leverage to flip someone against a ringleader. But low-level defendants—drug mules or perhaps a working mother who succumbed to a stupid moment of drug temptation—don't have information to offer. Consider the case of Anthony Brigham, caught in a 1991 Drug Enforcement Administration sting. Brigham acted as a lookout at a drug buy. That's a crime, but he did little more than wander around a parking lot, and never came into the presence of the drugs. The three major traffickers caught in the sting all traded information for lower sentences, receiving as little as four months of community service for the Salvation Army. But Brigham was the classic dupe, knowing nothing and hence having no names to deal: he drew the mandatory minimum, ten years. Of this outcome, the federal appeals judge, Frank Easterbrook (my brother, who was in no way involved in the preparation of this article) wrote, "Meting out the harshest penalties to those least culpable ... accords with no one's theory of appropriate punishments." Congress reduced the sentence-inversion problem in 1994, but the new formula basically only helps people whose prior records were spotless. There remain cases in which the low-level offender receives worse punishment than the high-level crook, raising the question of whether current sentencing rules have replaced old forms of inequality with new ones.

Adopting a system of mandatory minimums, no parole, and broad prosecutorial power had a rational purpose. For the dangerous felon who has committed genuine crimes, the new system ratchets up the legal pressure like crazy. Prosecutors have made skillful use of their new powers in cases of dangerous crime, an important reason the system has gotten so much better at getting career criminals off the streets. But, from the standpoint of fairness, what is striking about the new system is that it makes connections, community standing, and establishment attorneys even more of an advantage than they were before.

Important to understanding the sequence of incrimination is that much of it happens off the books, in private meetings in the prosecutor's office. No judge supervising, no jury listening, and no public record for newspapers to expose. Bargaining sessions with prosecutors are normal and probably unavoidable to keep the system functioning, but they present an opportunity in which the defendant from an upper-quarter background can quietly make the case to have drug possession or a similar minor offense excused. For serious crimes, prosecutors come down equally hard on everybody. Lesser crimes are a different matter—and it's lesser crimes that are generating the imprisonment boom.

IMAGINE TWO PEOPLE charged with the same level of minor drug possession arriving at a meeting with the prosecutor. One is a high-school-graduate day-laborer accompanied by a public defender who has had only a few hours to prepare. The other is a college grad with a nice house, a good job, polite bearing, and a big-firm lawyer who has memorized every slight imperfection in the police report. Expensive lawyers can backfire; prosecutors may resent a hotshot attorney while respecting the public defender who deals with the system day in and day out, just as they do. But, given the choice, which of these situations would you rather be in? "The well-off person will hire a defense lawyer who comes from a top firm and is a former state or federal prosecutor, and that person is going to have a much easier time negotiating with his or her former colleagues than some twenty-six-year-old assistant public defender," says Scott Wallace, director of the National Legal Aid and Defenders' Association. The upper-quarter defendant's conference may result in the charge being dropped or bargained down to fines and probation. Sometimes this happens for a poor or working-class person, too, but, judging by incarceration statistics, not as often.

Income level and social status are increasingly reflected in the question of whether the accused person even has a personal lawyer. On TV, every character down to the local newsboy has a sharp-eyed attorney exploiting loopholes. In reality, federal statistics show that 85 percent of defendants come to the bar as indigents, just 15 percent flanked by a private lawyer. To appear as an indigent, thus falling back on a public defender, is not a fate solely for penniless ragamuffins. Most employed, married, God-fearing people in the working or lower middle classes simply do not have the funds to retain private attorneys who may charge $25,000 or more for a routine criminal case.

It doesn't help that public defenders' caseloads are larger than ever. Funds for legal service programs are declining relative to the increasing number of people being hauled into the dock. Public defenders today carry 150 or more cases a year; some, up to 500. That means the typical public defender has about one working day, or often as little as a couple of hours, per client. That's total time, including investigation, preparation, and court appearances. A review of the case file; followed by an attempt to get the prosecutor to downshift the charge; followed by the advice to plead before trial makes the outcome even worse—that is all many typical criminal defendants receive. Attorneys for the sons or daughters of the connected, in contrast, pull out all the stops. Schlosser has chillingly written in *The Atlantic Monthly* that the daughter of Rudolph Slate, the judge who sentenced Douglas Gray to life in prison for buying a pound of marijuana, was herself later arrested for selling the same drug. Instead of jail, she received sealed records and, probably, probation.

THAT THE WAR ON CRIME has a dark side is certainly no secret. A few states have recently cut back their mandatory-minimum statutes. The Sentencing Commission, specifically designed to be coldhearted, has called on Congress for legal authority to soften overkill like the 100-to-one rule. U.S. drug policy director Barry McCaffrey, a former Gulf war general who is as gung-ho on this subject as any human being can be, recently said that "we can't incarcerate our way out of this problem" and now advocates treatment rather than jail for low-level offenders. Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer has said that "mandatory sentencing laws should be abolished." Even Edwin Meese, who, as Reagan's attorney general, was present at the creation of the 1986 law that spurred the incarceration surge, has said that the mandatory-minimum concept "ought to be reviewed."

Yet Congress has taken no action on the Sentencing Commission's request, while Bill Clinton, normally eager to feel people's pain, has said little on the hardships caused by "appallingly long" jail terms. There remains a competition to see who can talk toughest about crime—made easier by the knowledge that the senator's or congressman's own children, or their campaign donors' children, are unlikely to be the ones dragged away and locked into a man-made hell for some small moment of temptation or misjudgment.

Vietnam-era conscription was not abolished until the government ended student deferments and adopted a pure lottery system. Once the draft imperiled children of the prosperous—and of members of Congress—it was quickly legislated out of existence. The all-volunteer military system took its place, and those who did volunteer were afforded much better conditions. The parallel here is obvious. Even considering that the affluent commit fewer crimes, if the criminal justice system began locking up the children of the suburbs for drug possession with the same enthusiasm with which it now locks up the children of the poor and working class, the howling for sentencing reform would be deafening.

During the '80s, when violent crime was escalating, it was reasonable for society to react harshly. It was, perhaps, even defensible for the law-abiding person to think that, if some people suffered unjustly under a severe sentencing regime, that would be preferable to a system that allowed violent predators to walk free. But, now that violent crime is in decline and the system has become efficiently focused on locking up the predators, the moral equation has changed.

Everyone benefits from the reduction of crime in the streets, but, measured by time served, only average people are paying the costs. We should either lock up the favored, too, or revise the sentencing process to render it humane. ■

Wishy-washy or wise?

What "W" Stands For

By DANA MILBANK

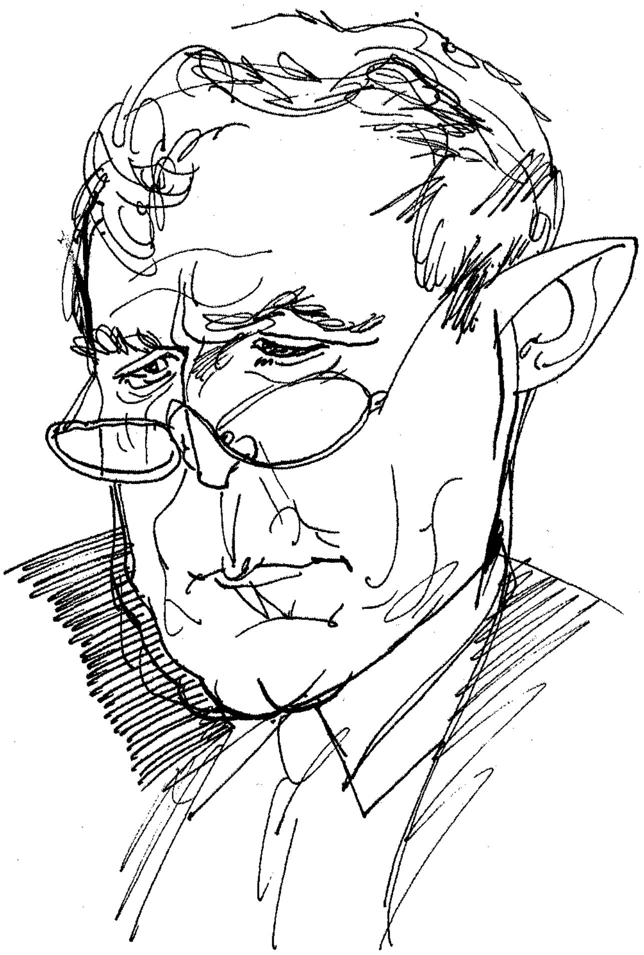
AUSTIN, TEXAS

WHAT, EXACTLY, does George W. Bush believe? The man tells us precious little himself. When the Texas governor announced his presidential exploratory committee, he offered but small nuggets. "I want the twenty-first century to be prosperous, and I don't want anybody being left behind," he vowed, thus distancing himself from all those presidential candidates who favor malaise and oppression. "America must be prosperous and strong to make sure the next century will be peaceful," he elaborated a few days later—gratuitously provoking the famine and bloodshed lobbies.

To get a clearer idea of what Bush is about, one must leave the governor's mansion and drive 20 minutes north to the improbably named Austin suburb of Jollyville. There you will find Mrs. Gutierrez's second-grade class in the middle of its weekly character-building lesson. A boy named Tray raises his hand to compliment Philip for "trying not to hurt people's feelings." Pint-sized Jessie pipes up to compliment Pamela because "when I had no friends at recess she came over and played with me." But then a boy complains about some naughty behavior. "Is that responsible?" Mrs. Gutierrez asks. "No!" the class says in unison. "Is that compassionate?" "No!" "What should we be doing at all times?" the teacher asks. "Personal best," the tots respond. Thus do the happy children of Jollyville, under a public school program championed by Governor Bush, learn how to become "good citizens for Texas." In December, they studied perseverance; in March, self-reliance. Those with exemplary character get a seat at the "VIP Honor Table" in the lunchroom.

Still don't grasp George W.'s philosophy? Then drive north for another hour to Waco, the town David Koresh and his radically anti-government Branch Davidian sect put on the map. Here, in another public school program backed by Bush, a Baptist seminary student named Brandon Barnard is warning a group of sixth-graders at Midway Intermediate School about genital warts "the size of my fist." Such warts are tough to remove, he adds. "You do what you want," Barnard says, as the children squirm. "I don't want anybody cutting, burning, or freezing that part of my body." Barnard flashes a slide on the screen listing the consequences of premarital sex: cancer, AIDS, death, pain, emotional scars, infertility. Then he shows a slide listing the consequences of abstinence:

ILLUSTRATIONS *By* PHILIP BURKE



self-control, self-respect, self-discipline. "Virginity is a gift," Barnard declares, holding up a package in purple wrapping paper. "I'm proud to be a virgin."

The two scenes, and hundreds like them playing out across Texas, encapsulate the Bush ideology. It is, at first glance, a conservative message, based on the notion that traditional values will help prevent poverty and other ills. But, deeper down, Bush's approach, warts and all, should sound familiar—and possibly comfortable—to some liberals. He assumes that government can be a force for good and that it has a responsibility to help the weak. Bush's stances so far on national issues such as Kosovo and abortion have been full of ambiguity and obfuscation, seemingly dictated more by tactic than by principle. Still, beneath Bush's mush is some evidence that he's trying to introduce a government-friendly conservatism to a party often hijacked by harsh and selfish ideology.

Bush's own label for his philosophy, "compassionate conservatism," is a tired phrase and easy to ridicule. Bob Dole used it to great effect in his 1988 presidential campaign. But, in Bush's case, it appears to imply a more activist style of conservative governance. Instead of demanding anti-abortion laws, he seeks alternatives, such as abstinence and adoption programs, which will reduce abortions. Instead of the usual Republican lock-'em-up-and-throw-away-the-key line on criminal justice, he has fostered a faith-based rehabilitation program for prisoners. He has demanded increases in education funding and opposed anti-immigration measures. Instead of a flat tax, he talks of modest cuts and reducing regressivity.

"What he understands about conservatism that many conservatives don't is that, at its core, it's caring about the poor, the underclass," says Al Hubbard, an old business-school classmate of Bush's who has helped him line up advisers. "The biggest problem facing our country is the underclass and the lack of opportunity for the underclass." And the answer, says Hubbard, "is not about saying, 'Lower taxes, reduce regulation, and everybody will be fine.'" It is, rather, about a host of government interventions that Bush and his advisers have proposed: mentoring programs, literacy programs, welfare-to-work programs in which church volunteers offer both skills training and Bible study, cuts in sales taxes that disproportionately affect the poor, tax incentives to aid poor neighborhoods, and substantial increases in public education spending.

THESE IDEAS may sound more Jesse Jackson than Ronald Reagan, but they are common in Bush circles. Typical is Mark McKinnon, who worked for Democrats (he still has photos of Bush's Democratic predecessor, Ann Richards, in his office at Paul Begala's old firm) before agreeing to be Bush's media strategist. "He's willing to step out on issues that have long been contrary to the interests of the Republican Party," McKinnon says. "He's figured out a way for Republicans to actually be *for* something." Several conservative Democrats in the Texas legislature, likewise, backed Bush's reelection. Even Texas Democratic Party spokeswoman Liz Chadderdon admits: "When you look at Bush's agenda, you could plug in Clinton's name and it would be the same."

More of such words from Democrats would make Bush a formidable challenger to Vice President Gore. On the other hand, the very things that make Democrats embrace Bush will irk the GOP's conservative primary voters. The Bush strategy appears to be a calculation that the hard right of the Republican Party, after two presidential defeats, may be willing to take half a loaf—much as liberal Democrats accepted the more centrist Clinton in 1992 after twelve years in the wilderness. Bush may also be gambling on support from independents, who can vote in Republican primaries in some states. It's a plausible strategy, particularly because so many Republican candidates are already vying for the far right's backing.

But, while Bush's philosophy may have a ring of familiarity to some Democrats, they would be mistaken to think he is one of them. "It sounds like liberalism because there's concern for the poor, but it doesn't come out of liberalism," says Marvin Olasky, a University of Texas professor who advises Bush. "He's a throwback to one of the conservative strains of the nineteenth century." Bush doesn't come from the economic conservative/social Darwinist school but neither does he side with the fundamentalists/moralists.

So what is Bush? Some conservatives have argued that he is reunifying the Reagan coalition of fiscal conservatives and the religious right that fell apart under Bush's father. But those wishful thinkers will be disappointed. First, Bush isn't fleeing from his old man. Many of young Bush's top advisers—Larry Lindsey, Michael Boskin, John Taylor, Martin Feldstein, Al Hubbard, Paul Wolfowitz, Condolleezza Rice, Bob Kimmitt, and Josh Bolten—also served in or gave advice to his father's administration.

More significantly, the coalition Bush is assembling is in some ways the opposite of Reaganism. Reagan's alliance was in large part libertarian, and young Bush's is communitarian. The communitarian movement, known also by its "civil society," "social capital," and "quality of life" buzzwords, is vaguely defined, but it's based on the idea that too much Hobbesian individualism has created an atomized, selfish, and disconnected society. Government, by encouraging private and nonprofit efforts to restore community, and by tempering individual rights with responsibility to society, can help to restore the purpose. But, in truth, the philosophy's roots go much further back, to Aristotle, who believed that government could help to engineer an ideal society. It's the kind of conservatism championed by Edmund Burke, and it claims such historic figures as Disraeli and Bismarck, who were pioneers of the welfare state. A few modern conservatives, including Olasky and columnist George Will (whose 1983 book *Statecraft as Soulcraft* was an anti-individualist tract), have taken this view, but they were oddballs until now.

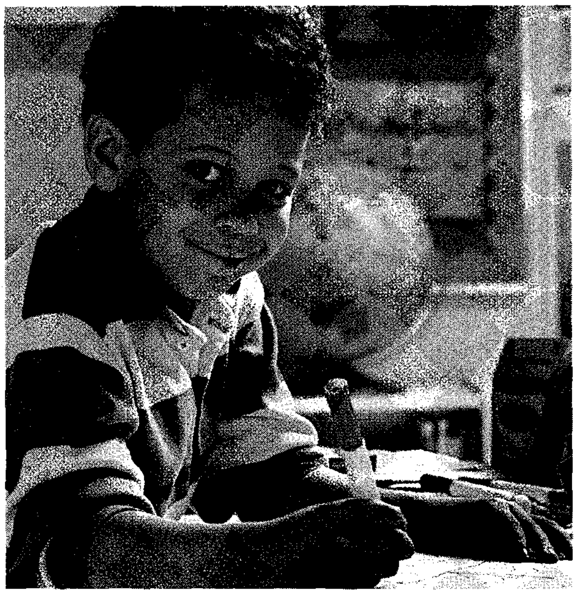
"It's a new coalition," Olasky says. "That's why some people on the right are so uncomfortable" with Bush. In Bush's way of thinking, the individual-rights champions on both sides—the civil libertarians on the left and the anti-government, leave-us-alone right-wingers—are on the outside. They'll be replaced by a mixture of incentive-based conservatives and good-government liberals. "He could bring a lot of communitarian Democrats with him," Olasky says. If liberals were willing to give up some federal control, Bush and like-minded conservatives would be content to spend more money on the poor and other government pursuits. "Let's throw away the budget cutters," Olasky says. "I see that coming with Bush. I see that as part of a governing alliance."

Some still suspect that Bush is a moderate, establishment Republican in his father's image. But they, too, are mistaken. President Bush, with a sense of noblesse oblige, saw himself as a duty-bound steward with little ideological passion. But his son, a baby-boomer and a product of the 1960s, is more activist than caretaker.

In this sense, his outlook is somewhat like Al Gore's, and the two are largely vying for the same governing coalition. Gore's "livability" agenda, proposals to rescue communities from urban sprawl, are part of the same quality-of-life genre that inspires Bush. Young Bush and Gore, of course, are both scions of powerful political fathers, educated in prep schools and the Ivy League. Both men are correspondingly cautious and tend to favor small initiatives to sweeping change. Gore also grasps the "limited government" philosophy that is a pillar of Governor Bush's thought. In fact, Bill Bradley, taking a more traditional Democratic view, contrasts himself from Gore by promising to "cultivate ten strong oaks rather than sprinkling water on a thousand house plants." Former Clinton official Lanny Davis, a fraternity brother of Bush's at Yale (and a Gore backer), says: "Among all the Republicans running, [Bush] comes closest to the centrist Democratic philosophy." Bush, says Davis, is "as close to Bill Clinton and Al Gore as he could be politically. George Bush is on the forty-seven yard line in one direction, and Al Gore is on the forty-seven yard line in the other direction."

Bush aides, not surprisingly, bristle at the Clinton-Gore comparison, which they see as an attempt to make their candidate appear too liberal to Republican primary voters. "Sorry, Lanny," says Karen Hughes, Bush's press secretary. "Governor Bush is not on the same field. The Democrats are trying to make comparisons that will hurt him in the Republican primary. It's ridiculous, and they know it's not true." Hughes, for her part, calls her boss an "activist conservative." "He's not anti-government," she says. "He believes there is a role for government, but it should be limited."

Hughes, in many respects, is correct. Though their coalitions overlap and their philosophies intersect, there will still be plenty to separate Bush and Gore. Bush leans toward private-sector solutions, while Gore errs on the side of government intervention. Bush backed legislation allowing Texans to carry concealed firearms; Gore is a strong gun-control advocate. Gore is famously green, while Bush, backed by business and oil men, has been advised by the Competitive Enterprise Institute's Fred Smith, who wants public land privatized and says that the "EPA is a massive mistake." Their differences on abortion and organized labor are equally stark. The two men also will be forced to placate the hardcore interest groups in their parties: Gore and labor, Bush and fundamentalists. If they are nominated, the choice for many voters may come down not to the men but to their fellow travelers: Bush's Bob Barr or Gore's Ted Kennedy?



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Virtually none of this Bush philosophy has emerged yet, and that's just fine with the governor's advisers. "He gains in the polls every week by doing nothing," says one. Even Bush has been marveling at his good fortune. "I held a press conference on the drought, and it rained the next day," he told the Texas Daily Newspaper Association at a recent luncheon. "Now my mother's calling up for tips on the lottery." The reception for Bush is, as always, adoring. The governor, after a round of handshakes, gets a fawning introduction and a standing ovation from the newspaper executives. His speech is full of progressive-sounding themes—research and development tax credits and references to his sales tax cut for diapers and over-the-counter medicines. He calls education "by far the most important thing a state does," vowing to hold schools accountable, a favorite theme of New Democrats.

After the session, the Texas press tries to trap Bush into stating positions. They pepper him with abortion questions ("I'm pro-life, and I've had a consistent position"), gay rights ("I believe we should never discriminate against anybody"), and hate-crime legislation ("All crime is hate"). Three times, Bush falls into a reporter's trap and begins to elaborate on his philosophy but then catches himself. "I've stated my position," he says. Then he returns to his preferred subjects: limited government, local control, strong families, personal responsibility. The governor chats with the reporters about his latest fishing trip in his familiar, locker-room manner. His banter is friendly, his intonation half Poppy Bush, half Perot. The reporters are charmed. And, when they return to their typewriters, they will find, once again, that deft Governor Bush has told them nothing new.

But, while Bush continues to be cleverly opaque in public, he has been meeting in Austin with a steady procession of policy advisers. Bush is far from devising a specific agenda, but his advisers paint a surprisingly unified vision of the philosophy he would adopt as president.

The Russian kitsch industry specializes in *matryoshka*, hollow wooden figures of the country's leaders. Inside a Yeltsin shell is a Gorbachev egg, which surrounds a Brezhnev egg right down to a solid Lenin core. If one were building such a toy to explain Bush's domestic policy, the first layer inside the Bush shell would be Indianapolis Mayor Steve Goldsmith. Inside Goldsmith would be Harvard Professor Robert Putnam.

Goldsmith, a Republican, is Bush's chief domestic policy adviser. He is by necessity a pragmatist, and he has been a pioneer in the civil-society movement also championed by the likes of New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani. His idiosyncratic policies in Indianapolis have a streak of concern for social justice running through them—and Bush's will, too. "I think the governor is articulating a new vision for the Republican Party," Goldsmith says. "You can't miss the idea that the marketplace operates unevenly.... Prosperity ought to have a purpose. We're talking about the poor in a very serious way." Among the proposals that civil-society conservatives favor is a large charity tax credit for those who volunteer to help the poor. "I do think he's seriously conservative," Goldsmith says of Bush, but he doesn't think conservatism should be "an excuse to ignore people who are without opportunity."

Goldsmith's website lists a profusion of good-government proposals: reinventing government, more police, fatherhood initiatives, high-tech incentives, neighborhood empowerment, worker retraining. That agenda may well turn out to be Bush's, but it also happens to summarize Al Gore's. "A legitimate observation," Goldsmith says with a chuckle. To be sure, the similarity is more in nomenclature than in policy. But, Goldsmith adds, "As the New Democrats have moved to the center to some extent and as the Republicans recognize the need to be compassionate to the poor, the distinction narrows." The mayor lists among the civil-society thinkers who influence him Harvard's Putnam, a left-leaning thinker who worked in the Carter administration.

Putnam, whose "bowling alone" theory seeped into national political discourse, sees promise for the left in the direction Bush and Goldsmith are taking. "Civic reengagement is a fundamental prerequisite for a new progressive era," he says. Though Goldsmith and Putnam disagree on the role of government in such efforts, Goldsmith's community programs are just the kind Putnam favors. "That's what worries the far right about Bush," he says.

Bush often seems to be torn between progressive instincts and Republican constituencies. In other words, he waffles. This year, for example, the Texas legislature has been debating a federally authorized expansion of health care to children living at 150 percent of the poverty line, or even 200 percent. In February, Bush said, "If you get up to one hundred and fifty percent, we are going to be covering a lot of children that aren't covered today," according to the *Austin American-Statesman*. But two weeks later he softened, and the same paper quoted him as saying, "I'll take a definite position at the appropriate time." On affirmative action, similarly, both opponents and supporters have claimed him. He says he's for "goals" but against "quotas," a vague distinction further complicated by his support for "affirmative access" (the awarding of spots in state universities to high school students who finish in the top ten percent of their graduating classes). Some say that's affirmative action by another name—or that it's little different from Clinton's "mend it, don't end it" fudge.

On policies at the core of his civil-society philosophy, though, Bush hasn't been ambiguous. He admires such programs as "Turn Around Texas," in which local residents and police harass drug dealers in their neighborhoods. Like Giuliani, he's a tough law-and-order guy who has presided over expanded police powers. And he welcomes church-state cooperation. When a faith-based drug rehab group got into trouble with a state agency, Bush called off the regulatory dogs, saving the program. "The state has been our advocate, our boosters," says Gerry Phelps, a Methodist minister who founded a welfare-to-work program that offers job training, life-skills lessons, and Bible study.

Bush's economic policy, like his social policy, has a peculiar preoccupation with the poor and working class. Some of his friends and advisers hear echoes of Jack Kemp. "In a funny

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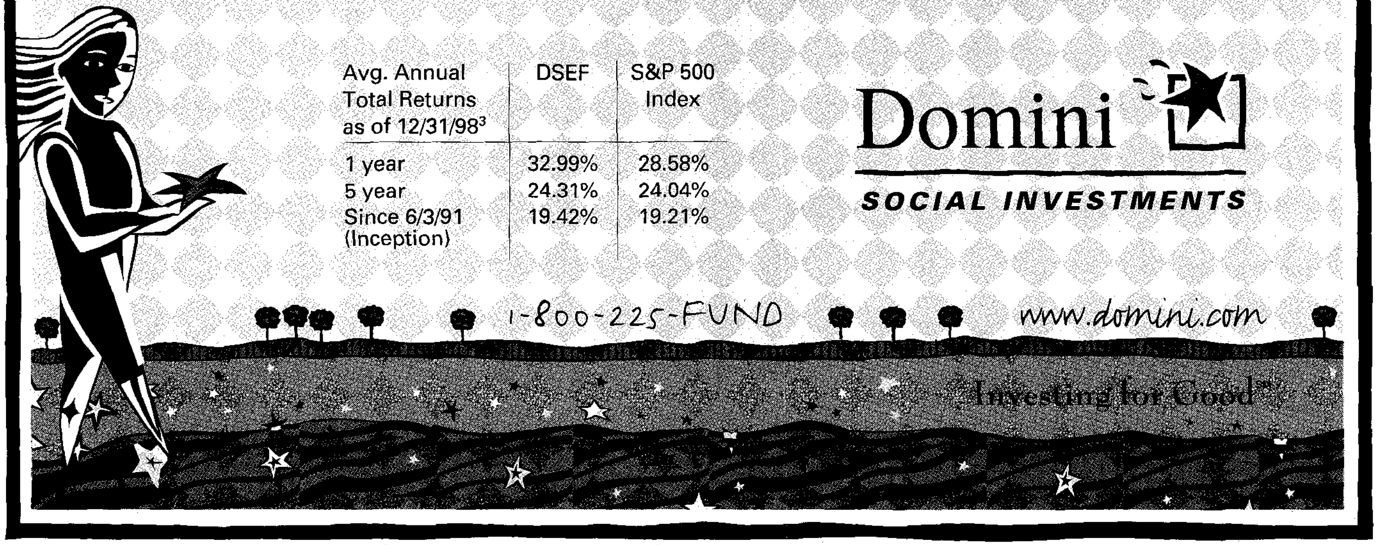
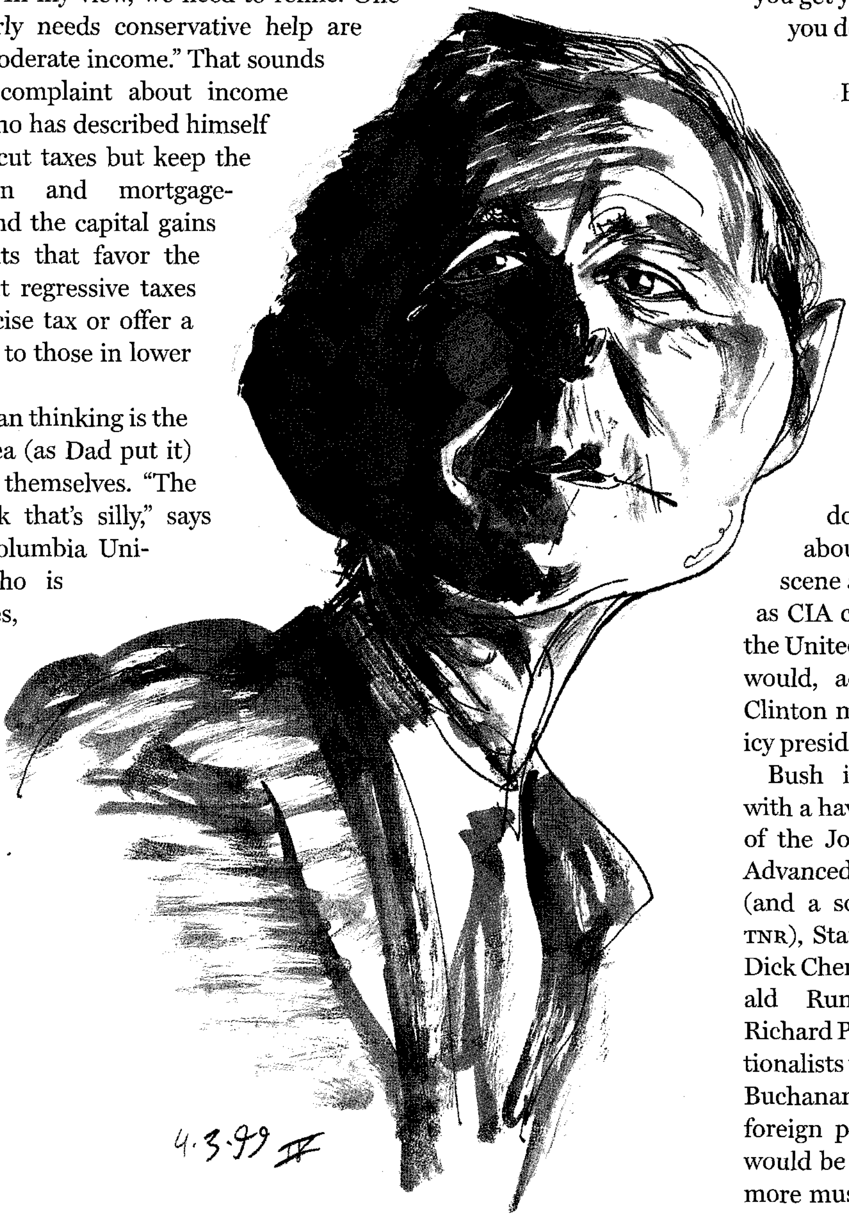


For more information including fees and expenses, call for a free prospectus. Please read it carefully before you invest. Past performance is no guarantee of future results. Investment return and principal value will vary, and you may have a gain or loss when you sell shares. **1.** Morningstar™ proprietary ratings are subject to change monthly and reflect historical risk-adjusted performance as of 12/31/98. They are calculated from the fund's 3- and 5-year average annual returns in excess of 90-day T-bill returns with appropriate fee adjustments, and a risk factor that reflects fund performance below 90-day T-bill returns. The top 10% of funds in their category receive five stars. **2.** Morningstar Principia Pro for Mutual Funds January '99 Release ranked the Fund in the top decile of all domestic equity funds for the one year (407 out of 4,412 funds), 3 year (84 out of 2,802 funds) and 5 year periods (63 out of 1,702 funds) ended 12/31/98. **3.** Total return figures are historical and include changes in share price, reinvestment of dividends and capital gains. The Fund waived certain fees during the period, without which returns would have been lower. The Standard & Poor's 500 Index is an unmanaged index in which direct investment cannot be made. Although the Fund is no-load, certain fees and expenses apply to a continued investment. Signature Broker-Dealer Services, Inc., Distributor. 3/99 © 1999 Domini Social Investments LLC. ADNR002-01 way, you can almost call him a populist," says James Langdon, a Democratic lawyer and an old friend of Bush's. When the two men discussed foreign policy, Langdon recalls that Bush declared: "I want to know how it's going to affect American workers." Thought Langdon: "That's a strange thing for a Republican to say." (Of course, it could also be that what Bush really wanted to know was how foreign policy would affect those American workers' employers.)

Bush's economics chief, Larry Lindsey, a former Fed governor, has strong supply-side credentials. But Lindsey says times have changed. "The country doesn't need another revolution," he told me. "In my view, we need to refine. One group that particularly needs conservative help are those with low and moderate income." That sounds like the old liberal complaint about income inequality. Lindsey, who has described himself as a populist, would cut taxes but keep the charitable-contribution and mortgage-interest deductions and the capital gains tax. To offset tax cuts that favor the wealthy, he would cut regressive taxes like the telephone excise tax or offer a higher percentage cut to those in lower brackets.

Missing from Bushian thinking is the voodoo-economics idea (as Dad put it) that tax cuts pay for themselves. "The governor would think that's silly," says Glenn Hubbard, a Columbia University economist who is advising Bush on taxes, budget, and health care. "I don't think he's ideological at all," says Hubbard. "He has strong principles, but they're at the big-picture level. He wants market solutions wherever possible, but he also recognizes a role for government in helping markets work." Bush's record in Texas, a boom-time combination of modest tax cuts and small spending increases, confirms this. His latest budget includes a $2 billion property tax cut, $1.5 billion more for teachers and schools, and plans to cut sales taxes on diapers and medication.



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The anti-tax Republicans, already suspicious because of President Bush's tax-raising budget deal in 1990, seem to be acquiescing to the son, but not without some difficulty. Grover Norquist's Americans for Tax Reform spent $120,000 on radio ads protesting a tax shift Governor Bush proposed early in his administration. Bush wanted to relieve the tax burden by shifting it in part onto small businesses. Conservatives were sure that the creation of new taxes would eventually make taxes higher. Bush retreated in favor of a straight cut. "He sinned in thought but not in action," Norquist says. Norquist, who has made the pilgrimage to Austin, says Bush backs his view on all major issues: school choice, tort reform, and a supermajority for raising taxes. He's not a purist, of course. "He will be a creature of what's around him," Norquist says. Still, unlike purists such as Forbes, Bush can win. "There are ideologues, icebreakers who open new paths," Norquist says. "But you get your head beaten in when you do that."

In international affairs, Bush comes closer to being his father's son. This shouldn't be surprising. He is a typical governor, meaning he hasn't had to worry about foreign events. And he grew up with a foreign-policy-obsessed father, so something was bound to rub off. Young Bush doesn't care as deeply about the international scene as his father, who served as CIA chief and ambassador to the United Nations and China. He would, advisers say, follow the Clinton model of a domestic policy presidency.

Bush is surrounding himself with a hawkish crowd: Wolfowitz, of the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (and a sometime contributor to TNR), Stanford Provost Rice, and Dick Cheney. Others include Donald Rumsfeld, Kimmitt, and Richard Perle, committed internationalists who have no patience for Buchanan's protectionist line. His foreign policy advisers say Bush would be determined to project a more muscular presence overseas and pursue an aggressive missile defense system at home. He is determined that GOP "rivals won't out-tough him," as one adviser puts it. "He strikes me as tougher-minded in some ways than his father," says Perle. And, says Perle, Bush is likely to take the internationalism displayed by Clinton and Gore even further: "There will be sharp differences on almost every foreign and security issue."

So far, however, there's been precious little evidence of this. For instance, while his rival John McCain has taken a detailed and forceful stance on the unfolding Kosovo crisis—stating that, if he were president, he would "intensify the bombing campaign to a very significant degree" and that, in contrast to Clinton, he would "consider the option ... of ground troops"—Bush has shied away from offering any opinions at all. "As governor of Texas, I do not have access to all the information and military intelligence available to the commander-in-chief," he explained to reporters at a March 25 press conference—one of the few times he's actually commented on Kosovo. Having thus excused himself from coming up with any answers of his own, Bush contented himself with asking questions instead. "Will the [NATO air strikes] lead to the goal of ending the conflict and bringing peace and stability to the region? I fervently hope so, although I share the concerns and misgivings of many Texans and Americans." What if air strikes don't get Milosevic back to the bargaining table? "I think that's the question people have got worries about, and so do I," says Bush. What would he do if he were in Clinton's place? "My question is is it good for America? That'll be the question I'll ask should I end up being the president." That sounds like his handlers talking.

On matters of international economics, Bush is an ardent free-trader, his advisers say, even less inclined than Clinton to engage in trade wars. George Shultz, the former Reagan secretary of state who has been coaching Bush, sees him developing a trade-based foreign policy emphasizing overtures to Mexico and a stronger emphasis on our own hemisphere. Other than his free-trading inclinations, Shultz doesn't believe Bush has an overarching worldview. "Obviously we need to have a sense of strategy, but we need to realize things we do along the way add up," he says.

But, as in the Clinton White House, Bush's aggressive foreign policy could at times conflict with his free-trade stance. The GOP, for example, plans to hammer Gore over the Chinese security issue, arguing that the administration's engagement policy has given away too much to China. But this won't work well for Bush, because his father had much the same policy and because he may have a weak spot of his own for a troublesome foreign country, if his overtures to Mexico as governor are any indication. Like China, Mexico is a country where the U.S.'s interest in fostering trade often conflicts with its other interests—for example, in fighting the drug trade and supporting efforts to clean up the corrupt and antidemocratic tendencies of the Mexican government. The question then is whether Mexico could be to Bush *fils* what China was to Bush *père*. And, notes one adviser, "it would be a tricky dance for Bush" to try to tar Clinton with the China-appeasing brush.

In his talks with advisers, Bush has confessed his ignorance of foreign policy details. But, at the same time, he seems almost cocky. A couple of months back, at a meeting on the defense budget, Bush cut off his advisers who were reciting the minutiae of Pentagon budgeting. "Shouldn't we back up?" he asked, requesting a discussion on military strategy. "If you get that right, the budget will take care of itself." At another meeting, Bush started the discussion with a bold assertion. "I'm going to be the next president of the United States," he said. "I need your help, not to become president—I'll take care of that—but to be a good president."

A number of conservative ideologues are already pouncing on Bush for his prospective policies, foreign and domestic. Terry Jeffrey, the editor of *Human Events* and '96 campaign manager for Pat Buchanan, signals the nature of the barrage George W. is likely to face. Buchanan will beat him up over trading partners' labor abuses and abortion policies. Jeffrey also says Bush will have to answer for his father's "appeasement in Tiananmen." Jeffrey says the right will be no kinder to Bush on abortion ("There effectively isn't much difference from Bill Clinton's position") and taxes ("His tax program had seventy new types of taxes in it").

But, it should now be obvious, Jeffrey's message won't work. After the anti-government period stretching from Reagan to Gingrich, "the pendulum has come back," says Bob Teeter, President Bush's former pollster, who has talked with young Bush. Even some of the religious right's leaders seem to concur; Pat Robertson has defended Bush's abortion non-stance. The question is how many others are willing to let Bush survive the primaries without a flat-tax pledge or abortion fireworks. They may even force him to retreat from his major success: education. In Texas, his state government meddles in the intricacies of local school policy. But, if he is forced to demand that the federal government stop its strings-attached education policies, he will surrender the tools he would need to make a difference as president.

This, perhaps, is why the Republican mainstream hasn't demanded specifics from Bush. A recent meeting at the Capitol Hill Club illustrated the tendency. Six GOP members of Congress had come to endorse Bush, such a familiar sight these days that only four reporters bothered to attend. Congresswoman Jennifer Dunn, a member of Bush's exploratory committee, led the group in speaking vaguely of Bush's "strong, secure, quiet personal faith," his "free and fair trade" policy and his status as a "tax cutter." But then the questions began, one about Bush's policy on a Palestinian state, one about free trade with China. "All good questions," Dunn said. "We haven't talked about those specific ones, but Governor Bush has a very strong foreign policy team." A reporter persisted in a question about China's efforts to get U.S. missile technology. "We'll see where he comes out on that," she said. "I don't like to answer for him."

Dunn, a single mother from Washington state who also calls herself a compassionate conservative, has good reason not to elaborate on her candidate's positions. Having just lost a battle against two hard-liners to become House majority leader, Dunn has seen firsthand the power of the party's right wing. And Dunn must know that the admirable reasons behind her support for Bush won't do the governor any good among the ideologues. "Here's somebody I can support with my heart as well as my mind," says Dunn. "He shows me he's watching out for people who can't always watch out for themselves." In a Republican primary, however, that's still not a rallying cry. ■

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

To See Ourselves

TELEVISION, IT SEEMS, is here to stay—not just as a medium but as a topic. TV is now so intertwined with our lives that we almost feel visually altered. A film director once revealed to me the penalty of his profession; he saw everything everywhere in terms of shots. The penalty we're paying for TV, merely as audience, is the sense of being engulfed by it. Everything we see has been or will be on TV: we live and move through a landscape of TV locations. Other twentieth-century arrivals—film, radio, the automobile—have greatly altered dreams and habits, but nothing other than TV has so insidiously swamped our selves, our homes. No wonder we're interested in the subject.

The film world has been pondering TV ever since the small screen came into being. This was inevitable, not just because film cannot completely exclude a phenomenon that floods our lives but because of film's physical-kinetic similarity. Writers have to write about TV with words; film—because it, too, is a succession of photographs on a screen—can comment on TV with basically the same means. (TV, however, does little through its images to comment on film.)

This connection, long familiar to Hollywood, is being pressed these days. Lately we've had *Pleasantville*, in which two modern teenagers enter a forty-year-old TV series, and *The Truman Show*, in which a man unknowingly lives his life on TV while everyone around him is an actor in the show of which he is the unwitting star. Now there's **EdTV** (Universal), in which a man is watched and heard continuously by TV cameras and mikes. Here he not only knows about the TV, he applied for the job. *The Truman Show*, for all its bite, struggled to remain credible; *EdTV* is so credible that it struggles another way—to escape predictability.

A brassy TV executive (played by Ellen DeGeneres) gets the idea of putting a TV crew into the life of an ordinary bloke, day and night. (My first reaction: she must have seen *The Truman Show* and has thought of a way to develop it.) Auditions are held, and a video-shop clerk named Ed Pekurny (Matthew McConaughey) applies. He gets the "part"—just to live his life with cameras and mikes in attendance all the time. At first the show gets only a mild response; Ed, family, and friends are conscious of being watched. But as they get used to being "on" all the time, and as privacies get more and more fractured, the show's ratings zoom. Ed gets renewed month after month, the show becomes a national hit, other TV shows and every kind of print medium are soaked in its success.

The screenplay, by Lowell Ganz and Babaloo Mandel, based on a French film, has enough sharp gags and plot twists to sustain it, with an ending that manages to be nice. Ron Howard, who directed *The Paper*, a lively look at another medium, makes every moment count. With the help of his editors, Mike Gill and Dan Hanley, Howard creates counterpoints to the main story—recurrent shots of differing sorts of viewers as they become totally absorbed in the loves and other difficulties of Ed, his brother and mother, his mother's second husband, and her first husband, who returns because of the show.

Those viewers, in various homes or offices or gathered in the street to watch Ed arrive at his girlfriend's house, are the real gist of the film. Those viewers virtually canonize Ed and the other people in his life, with a fervor that rings too true for either comfort or dismissal. Years ago, in the days when TV was just becoming a staple of consciousness, I saw a weather reporter in a restaurant, a young woman whose sole job was to read weather forecasts a couple of times a day on a TV news program. An older woman came up to her, seized her hand, and congratulated her on the "wonderful work" she was doing. The older woman may not have realized just how precisely she was speaking: she was in the presence of what was to her a wonder. I'll never forget how that older woman held the weather woman's hand in both of her hands, as if she were being blessed by this contact, a blessing that could be passed down to her children and grandchildren. That older woman was actually touching someone whom she had seen, and would see again, on the screen.

Like that elderly woman, the viewers in this film are enraptured by Ed, not especially because of anything he does but because he does it on the screen. He has gone through that screen like Alice through the looking glass, still the same Ed but miraculously exalted just by transposition. Thus Ed's TV show is a further erasure of the difference between art and life, a notable activity of the century now closing. And thus Ed's TV show is an insidious form of consolation. Our lives can't be so bad, think many, if a life so much like ours is on television.

Everything costs something. We don't know yet what TV will cost because we don't begin to know everything it can do. Pandora's box had nothing on that living-room box. In public terms, TV is a half-century old, and as yet we have small idea of how it will affect every aspect of our world. Still, as *EdTV* and the other recent films suggest, we certainly know we're in several kinds of transit. Politics is the most obvious plane of change; more than that, our very genes seem to contain secrets implanted by TV. What will we give birth to?

In any event, no slouching towards Bethlehem here. This birth will be prime-time stuff.

EdTV is a poor title because we can't understand it until we see the film; but it's lucidity itself compared with **Hideous Kinky** (Stratosphere). That, we learn eventually, is a phrase that two small English girls in Morocco have coined. "Hideous kinky" becomes their term for everything exciting or scary about this strange country.

They are the children of a young Englishwoman named Julia, who has left her London husband—not really her husband, it turns out, but he's the father of the girls—to find selfhood and inner peace in Marrakech. The screenplay, by Billy MacKinnon, derives from a novel (of the same name) by Esther Freud; it shows how Julia runs into the obstacles in her Moroccan life that everyone but she can anticipate. The story has a certain third-cousinly relation to Bowles's *The Sheltering Sky*, in that Julia finds love and sexual satisfaction with a North African just as the American woman does in the Bowles novel. But this new film is much less dark, much more conventionally romantic.

The picture has two special assets. The first is Kate Winslet. Fully recovered from her painted-face artificiality in *Titanic*, Winslet endows Julia with vitality and a kind of pathetic gush, the eagerness of an attractively vulnerable young woman to embrace a faith. As often happens with

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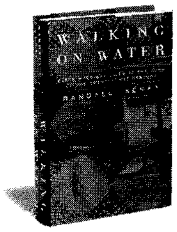

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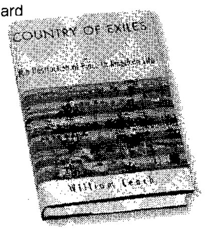

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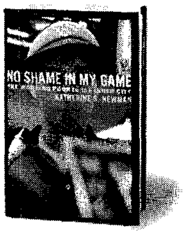

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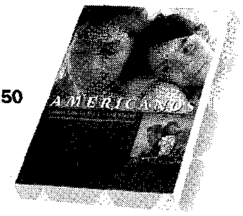

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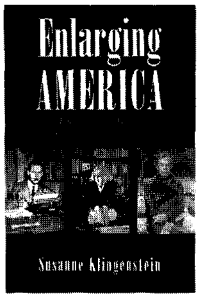
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good actors in mediocre films, Winslet is better than her role. Further, we get what the director, Gillies MacKinnon, and the cinematographer, John de Borman, have done with Morocco. MacKinnon, who captured Scottish light and air so well in *Regeneration*, has viewed Morocco—people, markets, streets, sunsets—as a feast, and with de Borman's help, he invites us to join him. ■

Jed Perl on Art

What Is Modern Art, Anyway?

MODERN ART IS assumed to have died some time ago, but the date of death and the cause of death remain in dispute. And as if that were not bad enough, there are at least half a dozen competing theories as to the date of birth, ranging from Cézanne circa 1900 back to Manet in the 1860s, and even, perhaps, to Caravaggio in the early seventeenth century. The birth and the death of modern art are among the most thoroughly studied enigmas in all of cultural history, but the mysteries have only deepened in the past couple of decades, as researchers in the museums and the universities have uncovered more facts and offered more interpretations. Parentage and ancestry are now hotly contested, and a dozen different genealogies are being suggested by a dozen groups of competing heirs.

The facts, new ones as well as old ones, keep exploding the theories, so that there are as many questions about how modern art lived as about how it died. Was modern art about purifying painting and sculpture? Was it about doing away with them? Or was it about something else entirely? And should we be saying "is" rather than "was"? There are those of us who suspect that modern art is still alive, that what some would call its "death" is mostly a matter of misunderstanding and marginalization, a lot of which can be blamed on the very experts in whose safekeeping the achievements of the past 125 years have been placed.

One thing is certain. Dead or alive, modern art remains awesomely popular. Museumgoers seem to feel an immediate connection with artists ranging from Van Gogh to Picasso, which might make you wonder whether so many could be so little alienated from a phenomenon that had been buried long ago. We have known for years that the public has a bottomless enthusiasm for the Impressionist and Post-Impressionist childhood and adolescence of modern art. Now it turns out that work from the maturity and even the old age of certain modern masters can be extraordinarily accessible, too.

"Matisse and Picasso: A Gentle Rivalry," which focuses on the achievements of these two giants between 1930 and Matisse's death in 1954, has been pulling in crowds at the Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth, where it will be until the beginning of May. In New York, we are seeing four shows about the later Picasso. "Picasso and the War Years: 1937–1945," organized by Steven A. Nash of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, is at the Guggenheim until the end of April. "Picasso: Painter and Sculptor in Clay," a study of the artist's huge output of ceramics, mostly executed in the late '40s and '50s, seems especially appealing. I keep hearing people express their delight in this exhibition, which originated at the Royal Academy in London and is at the Metropolitan Museum of Art until June. And there are two important gallery presentations of Picasso's later prints: a Picasso and Rembrandt exhibition at Krugier, and one juxtaposing Picasso's sexual themes with Hokusai's at Yoshii.

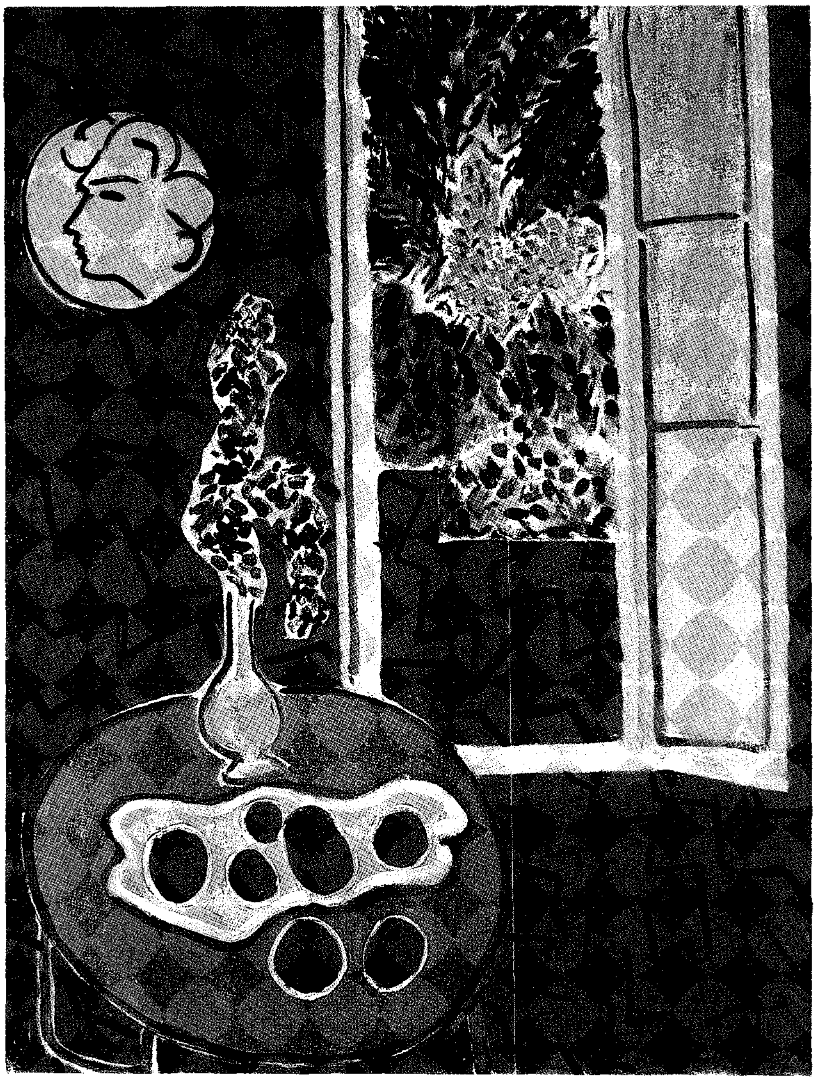
A Matisse show or a Picasso show can give museumgoers almost a cozy feeling. Yet there is also a confusion that comes with exploring the work of these masters with whom so many of us have grown up, because the closer we look, the harder it is to reconcile what we are seeing with what we learned in Modern Art 101. What was it that we were told about the modern movement? That everything moved toward reduction and abstraction? That less was more? That storytelling was dead? That the only public that the modern artist cared about was an elite obsessed with arcane information? If all this is so, then what are we to make of the crowd-pleasing jokiness of Picasso's ceramics, or the intricate overload of decorative motifs in some of Matisse's paintings of the '30s, or the elaborate figurative narratives that we find in Picasso's later prints?

These questions are not exactly new. All through the century some people have been arguing that modern art has as much to do with representation and complication as with abstraction and reduction, and that abstraction and complication are in fact reconcilable. There have always been ardent supporters of the fabulist's theater of Klee's later years, of the preternaturally lucid fantasies that Kandinsky produced during his Parisian period, of Matisse's rococo odalisques, of the muted painterly still lifes that Morandi was producing after World War II. And as scholars have corralled what seems like every last bit of information about the agreed-upon touchstones of modern art—late Cézanne, Cubist Picasso, '20s Mondrian, late '40s Pollock—attention has turned to one or another kind of work that had hitherto been regarded as a minority taste. Young scholars need fresh subjects, museums need new angles, collectors need things to buy.

The study of modern art has become more complicated with each passing day. Skeletons have been pulled out of closets. Historians, curators, critics, dealers, and collectors have taken an interest in whatever was once deemed atypical, uncharacteristic, idiosyncratic, minor, and marginal. While revivals and revisions have typically been the stuff of cultural history and artistic evolution, most of today's reconsiderations look more like onerous professional tasks than reflections of any kind of personal avidity. The study of modern art is in chaos; and it is not a creative chaos.

You would think that we would be wiser, after all that we have already learned. Beginning with *"Les Réalismes 1919-1939,"* at the Pompidou Center in 1980-81, there have been dozens of major revisionist survey shows all over Europe. In the United States, the retrospectives have become increasingly large and meticulously detailed. And there has been an avalanche of art historical studies, covering what happened in every nook and cranny of Europe in every year of the century. Yet in place of the sea changes in taste for which we might have hoped, what has developed is a kind of aesthetic Bermuda Triangle, into which a generation of scholars who grew up with Warhol's view of art as disposable fun are dispatching all the century's unsung achievements after granting them their fifteen minutes of fame. I don't think that these scholars know the difference between a burial and a revival; or perhaps they conceive of burial and revival as theoretical antinomies that they can cleverly invert.

Even amid the generally crossed signals and bizarre misreadings that are so common in recent art-historical studies, few projects can be quite as odd as "Matisse and Picasso: A Gentle Rivalry," the exhibition that Yve-Alain Bois, who is a professor of modern art at Harvard, has organized for the Kimbell in Fort Worth. When I heard about the show, I was glad that Bois, a historian who often writes about some of the most beautifully pared-down classic abstract art, was taking an interest in the Matisse and Picasso of the '30s, '40s, and '50s, with their sometimes vehemently representational instincts and their inveterate fondness for the risks of elaboration and over-elaboration. I was curious to see what Bois, who has been involved in magnificent exhibitions of Mondrian and Ellsworth Kelly, would do with the later days of two of the immortals of the School of Paris. I hoped that their genius for cross-pollinating representation and abstraction might move Bois away from his tendency to reduce later twentieth-century art to a series of elaborate endgames. But it seems that Matisse's and Picasso's unwillingness to engage with the kind of reductivist or nihilistic gambit that Bois knows best has left him, however much he may admire these works, unable to respond.



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Henri Matisse, "Red Interior: Still Life on a Blue Table," 1947

To the extent that Bois can be said to have a thesis, he begins with the utterly conventional thought that Matisse's neoclassical works of the 1920s represent a "ponderous" style based on "traditional modeling." Matisse's dazzlingly complex volumetric manner, with a power unmatched since the days of Raphael and Michelangelo, is dismissed as "traditional." And in the late 1920s, so far as Bois is concerned, it is Picasso who is "teasing Matisse out of his self-imposed role as Old Master in Nice and back into the ring of modernity." From then on the show is a series of confrontations, which Bois has a habit of describing with inordinately cute remarks such as "the score of [Picasso's] match with Matisse was a tie." Early in the exhibition, we see how Picasso was influenced by Matisse's sculpture. After that, they react to one another, back and forth, until Matisse dies. Then Picasso creates several cycles of paintings as memorials to his friend and rival.

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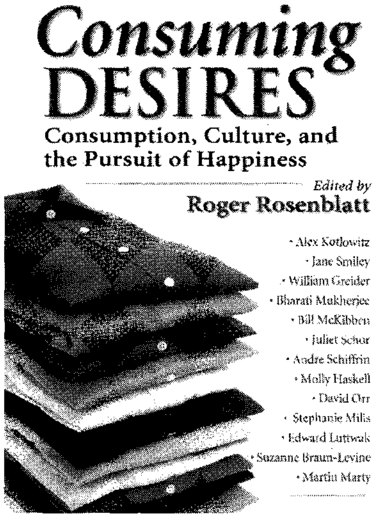

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When presented in skeletal form, Bois's idea has at least a kind of biographical charm. Matisse and Picasso were born more than a decade apart. Matisse turned 70 in 1939; Picasso was 60 in 1941. A significant amount of the anecdotal information on which Bois erects his big idea is drawn from the casually incisive memoirs of Françoise Gilot, the painter who was Picasso's lover in the '40s, when he was seeing Matisse fairly often in the south of France. But Bois is incapable of leaving well enough alone, and so he has turned a series of encounters, affinities, and sympathies into an elaborate theoretical structure that shoves Picasso and Matisse at each other to an extent that neither of them would have tolerated. Bois does warn us that this dialogue is not "the sole topic of their interaction (they converse with other artists, not necessarily the same ones, and, like all of us, with the world at large)"; but then he forgets his own warning.

Bois imagines that he is performing an "experiment," and believes that it is his prerogative "to eliminate all but one parameter." What justification can there be for an experimental method that grotesquely distorts the very subjects that it means to illuminate? By wildly exaggerating Matisse's and Picasso's impact on one another and virtually obliterating their relationships with other artists and earlier traditions, he misconstrues the trajectories of their careers. Bois seems to have not the vaguest idea of what kinds of pressures and counter-pressures are at work in the mind of a mature artist.

YVE-ALAIN BOIS IS a man with a big reputation. He cut a figure in the structuralist and poststructuralist world of Paris as a founder of *Macula*. In the United States, he has been a leading contributor to *October*, and has collected many of his essays in *Painting as Model*, which appeared in 1990. In that influential book, Bois presents himself as a voice of reason, negotiating among warring academic factions. He rejects the "blackmail" of fashion. He proposes to follow a middle path through the "ravages" of what he refers to as the "flux" between "Theory/Antitheory." Bois has an elegant turn of mind. When confronted with Matisse and Picasso, however, all he can think to do is concoct an elegant four-part duet; and in the show, the duet deteriorates into a series of inexplicable face-offs, which only serve to remind us of how different Picasso and Matisse really are.

This exhibition is the weirdest combination of high-falutin' theory and art history lite that I have ever seen, but Bois is too much the academic aristocrat to feel that he needs to explain himself. The question that I am left with is the question with which I began. If Bois believes, as he says in *Painting as Model*, that "the task that historically belonged to modern painting" is "that, precisely, of working through the end of painting," then what sense can he possibly make of two artists who, time and again, prove that painting can continue to do all the things that it has ever done? Bois might reply by reminding us that in *Painting as Model* he also observed that "if the match 'modernist painting' is finished, it does not necessarily mean that the game 'painting' is finished: many years to come are ahead for this art." And where does that leave Picasso and Matisse? Surely Bois believes they are part of "the match 'modernist painting'"? But in 1952, when Picasso paints a huge mural on the theme of *Peace*, has he not in many respects left "the match 'modernist painting'" for "the game 'painting'"? And when Matisse takes up stained glass in the 1940s, is he not exploring the very origins of "the game 'painting,'" which he finds in a medieval universe that flourished long before painting as we know it had even begun?

ALL OF THIS TALK of games and matches derives from the work of the French art historian Hubert Damisch, who is the subject of the title essay in *Painting as Model*, and whose idea that the impact of artists on one another can be understood as a kind of chess match gives Bois the conceit that he works to death in the Fort Worth catalogue. Bois has lots of fancy things to say about the chess match. It "is both linear and simultaneous, diachronic and synchronic," and that is just the beginning. Mostly, though, I suspect that Bois likes the chess metaphor because it provides him with a way to avoid the awe-struck encounter of one artist with the work of another that is generally termed "influence." Influence is an idea that he hardly seems to understand. He says that "the very notion of influence" has "implications of passivity." Well, that is not what anybody means when they say that Michelangelo influenced Raphael or that Cézanne influenced Picasso and Braque. Bois is talking gibberish.

The gibberish is complicated, of course. According to the chess metaphor, at any given time only certain pieces are on the board, and those are the pieces with which the players are working. But when Bois announces that "on Matisse and Picasso's chessboard, for example, abstraction is not allowed—it is excluded at the outset," I have to wonder about Matisse's paper cutouts. Bois might retort that they are decoration, not abstraction, but this verges on another one of his semantic

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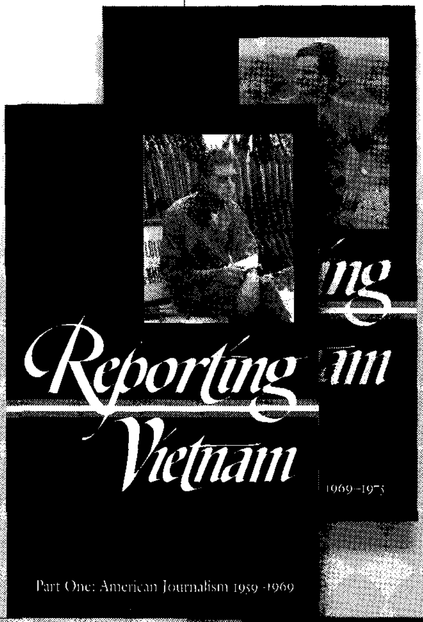
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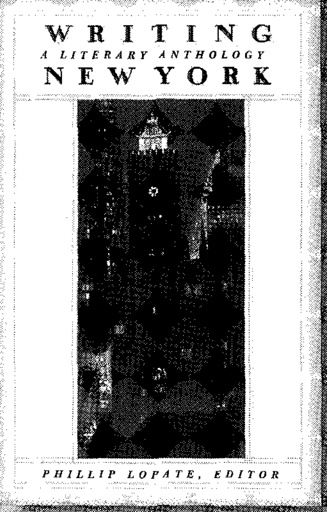
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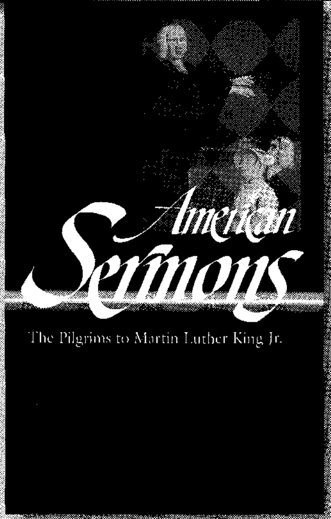
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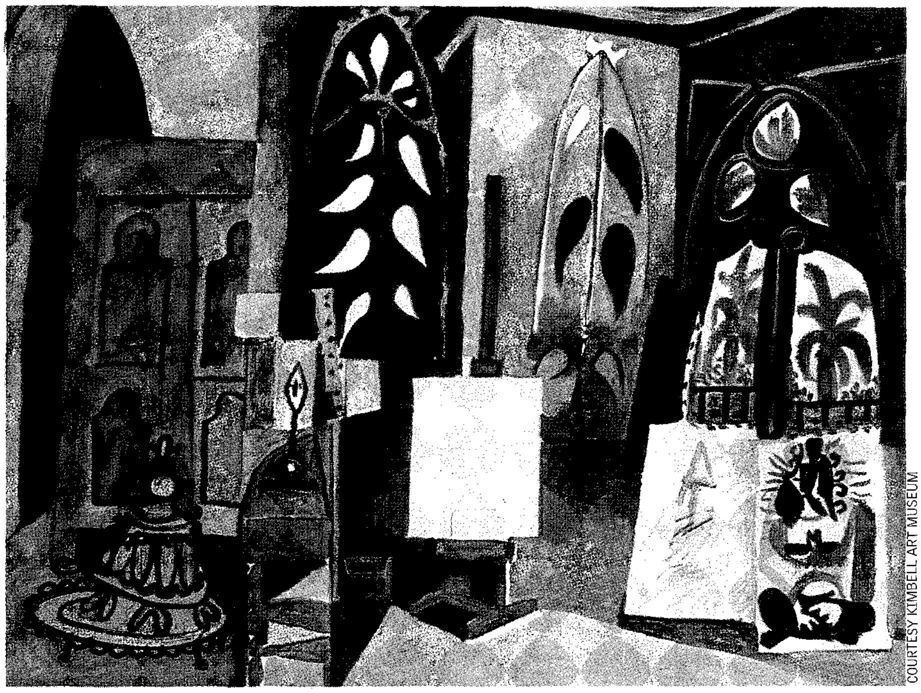
"A brief review cannot hope to do justice to the **scope and breadth** of this newest volume from the heroic editors at the Library of America." —*Library Journal* games, like his claim that influence implies passivity. I think that what Bois really likes about the chessboard metaphor is that it turns Matisse and Picasso into pawns in Duchamp's favorite game. The chess analogy makes everything that they do look a bit light and absurd, as if this were a sort of avant-gardist version of a Walter Matthau-Jack Lemmon movie. (*Grumpy Old Modern Masters.*) And as if Damisch's chess game were not enough, Bois brings in Mikhail Bakhtin and Harold Bloom. Literary theory is a screen that Bois erects to avoid confronting what is actually going on in the work.

At the Kimbell, "Matisse and Picasso" has a blockbuster appeal. My impression is that most visitors are just glad to see so many works by two modern superstars, and certainly they will find, shoe-horned into this tendentiously arranged exhibit, some wonderful paintings. Picasso is at his strongest toward the beginning and toward the end. Among the stand-outs are his coolly absurdist acrobats from the late '20s and several brilliantly cloissonéd compositions from the Marie-Thérèse period of the early '30s. I also like very much the brown, black, and gray views of the studio at La Californie, done in 1955–56; these paintings, with their shadowy yet lucid atmosphere, catch perfectly an artist's feeling at the end of a hard day's work, when all the hubbub melts into tranquillity. Matisse is at his strongest near the center of the show. There are works that approach transcendence—and maybe achieve it—in the series of moderately sized yet monumentally scaled interiors from 1946–48.

Unfortunately, the impact of Matisses such as *Interior in Yellow and Blue* and *Red Interior: Still Life on a Blue Table* is muffled because they are interspersed with Picassos that are really no more than entertaining rip-offs of Matissean ideas. Bois has not managed to put together a good selection of work from Picasso's Dora Maar period; this may have to do with the difficulty of obtaining certain loans. As for the interest that he takes in the paintings of Françoise Gilot and Paloma and Claude, the children she had with Picasso, I have the uneasy feeling that Bois simply doesn't see that these are just about the worst paintings of Picasso's career. When Bois hangs Matisse's *Red Interior: Still Life on a Blue Table* next to Picasso's slapdash *Claude in His Crib,* I have to wonder if there is something wrong with the man's eyes. Only the artists' worst enemies could hope for some of the juxtapositions in this show.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Pablo Picasso, "The Studio at 'La Californie,'" 1956

There is a thrilling cumulative impact, even in this awful presentation, to Matisse's figures, still lifes, and interiors from the late '30s and '40s. Nowhere else in art will you find images so distilled yet voluptuous. The execution is casual. Matisse lays in the color as rapidly as possible. And the informality fits the scenes of bohemian—well, luxurious bohemian—domesticity. The paintings are about lingering over the very idea of informality. Ultimately, in the late '40s, Matisse resurrected the kind of decorative weight that we know from the grandest medieval tapestries. Light is transformed into heraldic color. Figures and objects become talismans. The results are eye-filling, and disquieting, in the way that utterly happy experiences can be. These ultra-simplified canvases have had an almost incalculable impact since they left Matisse's studio half a century ago, yet his effects remain startling, almost nerve-wrackingly fresh. In the interiors of 1946–48, Matisse is inventing a metaphysics of hedonism.

AND THEN, RIGHT NEXT TO one of these masterpieces by Matisse, Bois hangs some clinker by Picasso. In putting such Matisses face-to-face with the infinitely less deliberated works that Picasso was doing in the same years, Bois may imagine that he is highlighting different approaches. Fat chance. Only in Bois's theory-drenched imagination could a complex interaction be extracted from the utter lack of resonance between Matisse's *Still Life with Shell,* that ultimate reflection on childish simplifications, and the mere virtuosity of Picasso's exceedingly handsome *Still Life with Steer's Skull.* This is not a chess game worth watching.

Some of the Matisses fail; but even when the Picassos succeed, they often do not succeed excitingly. Even if Bois had borrowed one of the greatest Dora Maar portraits—say, the exotically decorative 1937 image in the Musée Picasso, with yellow face and hands and striped walls—all that the comparison would suggest is that an artist can achieve radically different results with relatively flat color and daringly bold design. What Bois presents as Matisse's and Picasso's awareness of one another's work can more accurately be described as their mutual awareness of the modern past, of Van Gogh and Gauguin and the complicated cross-currents of abstraction and naturalism in Post-Impressionist painting. Obviously they have gone to some of the same sources, but did we need Bois to tell us this?

Bois's view of these artists and their work is arid and banal. He may have gravitated toward their image-rich late styles as a break from the kind of all-in-one impact that interests him in Newman, Ryman, and Judd. He may have become involved in a museum show that features the biggest names in twentieth-century art because the funding was forthcoming. Whatever the reasons, he misses what animates Picasso and Matisse. He doesn't grasp their reach, the way they draw from multiple sources, near and far. Apparently this historian believes that bad reviews and old rivalries were the things that were foremost in the minds of these geniuses when they got down to work. What other conclusion can we draw, considering how much attention Bois pays to what he believes are Picasso's and Matisse's reactions to one another's recent

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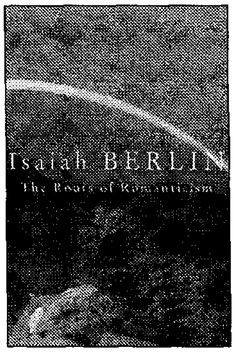
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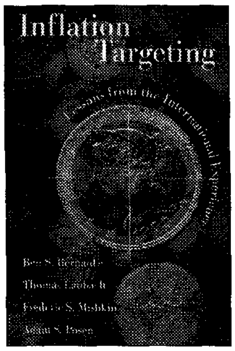

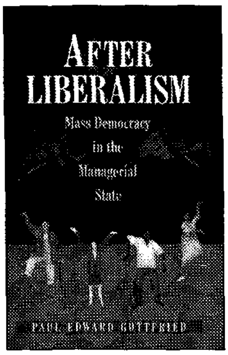
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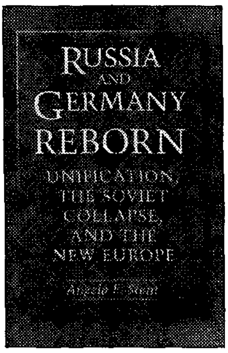
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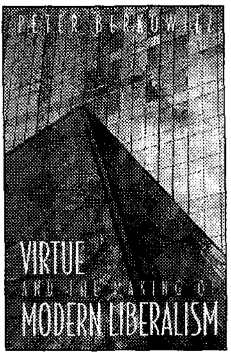
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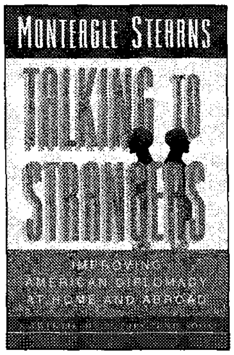
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Despite his formalist credentials, Bois is hopelessly tied to a contextualist view. What the show amounts to is a picture of two publicity-hungry old guys conducting a last paint-athon, while all around them painting staggers toward death and deconstruction and then, maybe, reconstruction. Bois closes with an especially scabrous Picasso, *Woman in a Rocking Chair*. If, as he believes, "Picasso has co-fathered a union with his [dead] competitor," the result is a mutant. Bois has turned two great careers into elegiac crap.

Lost in this morass is the story of two modern masters who, late in life, tipped their hats to one another as they set off in different directions. In the '40s, Matisse found that his concise, emblematic drawing and highly saturated color were leading him toward stained glass, tile murals, and paper cutouts. His work was approaching the distilled, abstract power that we associate with Brancusi and Mondrian. For Picasso, the '40s were very different. They were a time when, despite some triumphs, he was essentially in a holding pattern, unable as yet to embark on what would turn out to be his final adventures with a ribald theatricality. That adventure only culminated in the late '60s, with the prints in the *Suite 347* and the dozens of figure paintings which, when they were exhibited in Avignon in the early 1970s, struck Malraux as having some of the enveloping drama of Giotto's Arena Chapel.

I have no idea what Bois makes of the fact that Picasso is often strongest in the '50s and '60s when he is at his least Cubist. *Winter Landscape*, which is one of the most remarkable Picassos in the show, has more to do with Altdorfer, Grünewald, and El Greco than with Cubism or Matisse (who nonetheless admired the canvas and enjoyed looking at it during the months that it was on loan to him from Picasso). Bois conveys no sense of the overlapping richness of influences that flow through the working process of serious artists. Picasso's beautiful series of paintings of the interior of La Californie, the rococo-revival villa near Cannes that he moved into in 1955, may be (as Bois contends) a memorial to Matisse, but their array of grays, browns, and blacks and their layered spaces recall not any Matisse interior but rather the series of *Studios* that Braque had embarked on in the late 1940s. There are passages in the La Californie paintings, such as a chair with palettes and brushes, that may be quoted from Braque. And, like Braque in his *Studios*, Picasso evokes memories of Corot's studio paintings of the 1860s.

The Amen Stone

On my desk there is a stone with the word "Amen" on it, a triangular
fragment of stone from a Jewish graveyard destroyed many generations ago.
The other fragments, hundreds upon hundreds, are scattered, helter-skelter,
and a great yearning, a longing without end, fills them all:
first name in search of family name, date of death seeking
dead man's birthplace, son's name wishing to find
name of father, date of birth wanting to be reunited
with soul that desires to rest in peace. And until they
locate one another, they won't find perfect rest.
Only this stone lies calmly on my desk and says "Amen."
But now the fragments are gathered up in lovingkindness
by a sad good man. He cleanses them of every blemish,
photographs them one by one, arranges them on the floor
in the great hall, makes each gravestone whole again,
one again: fragment to fragment,
like the resurrection of the dead, like a mosaic,
a jigsaw puzzle. Child's play.

Yehuda Amichai

translated by Chana Bloch
and Chana Kronfeld

As for what Matisse got from Picasso, Bois observes of his work on *The Stations of the Cross* for the Vence Chapel (completed in 1950) that "angst being Picasso's domain, he is the one to consult." But Matisse felt in no way so constrained. And Picasso did not exactly have a lock on angst. We have magnificent drawings documenting Matisse's close study of precedents in Rubens and Mantegna. Ultimately *The Stations of the Cross*, like a newly invented language of grief, brings to mind not the ferocity of Picasso but the tragic calligraphy of Paul Klee's later work, which both Matisse and Picasso are on record as admiring.

Bois does include in Fort Worth one of Picasso's marvelous interpretations of Delacroix's *Women of Algiers*, the nineteenth-century painting that had already been a starting point for Matisse's odalisques. I suspect that what Bois likes in this homage is its combative, showoffish, and even parodistic elements, elements that would attract someone for whom a more reticent involvement with tradition is irreconcilable with a modern sensibility. Bois may see dangerously unmodern and old-hat thinking when Matisse actually does copies of Rubens and Mantegna. "Matisse," he insists, "nearly eighty, was not an apprentice trying to learn from established masters." But aren't the greatest artists always in some sense apprentices? Isn't that exactly what Matisse is when he looks to Rubens and Mantegna for help with his own essay in religious experience?

What Bois has produced in Fort Worth is no standard-issue view of modern art. This may be the first show, at least on this side of the Atlantic, to give serious consideration to the group of paintings that Picasso produced in the Grimaldi Palace in Antibes in 1946. I acclaim Bois's adventurousness. I am glad that he discusses the huge mural on the theme of *Peace* that Picasso did for his War and Peace Chapel in 1952. Yet when Bois writes that this mural, which could only be the work of a genius but is not itself a work of genius, "answers" Matisse's sublime Vence Chapel "almost point by point," I am left wondering whether revisionism is worth the effort if it is not tempered by a sense of quality that is as sure as its sense of adventure. Bois seems to accept lock, stock, and barrel all the Picassos that his predecessors rejected lock, stock, and barrel.

Bois has the reputation of being a formalist who begins with the work itself. His basic argument in *Painting as Model* is that different theoretical tools are needed to analyze different works of art. This sounds like a reasonable position; but when you come right down to it, all the models that Bois favors celebrate purification and disintegration. It would be an understatement to say that this becomes a problem in his show. Whatever the reasons for Bois's interest in the later decades of Picasso and Matisse, his imagination and his intellect remain stuck in a theoretical universe that has nothing to do with their work.

Bois must know instinctively that he has gotten himself into a jam. Why else would he be so intent on shifting our

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Swann Galleries 104 East 25th Street, NYC, 212-254-4710. **Auctions:** 4/15, **Rare Books.** 4/22, **19th Century Literature** including a Twain Collection, and **Children's Books.** 4/26, **Important 19th & 20th Century Photographs.** 5/13, **Works on Paper.** Newsletter with full auction schedule on request.

The Cardozo Gallery of the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law, 55 5th Avenue at 12th Street, NYC, 718-896-9211, www.ikdi.com, Sun–Thurs 10–8, Fri 10–4, closed Sat. **Richard Lewis Roth: Paintings the Moop Series Retrospective (1974–99)**—idiosyncratic, caligraphic, phonetic abstraction 4/9–5/30.

ACA Gallery 41 East 57th Street, 11th Floor, 212-644-8300, Tues–Sat 10:30am–5:30pm. 4/3 – 5/1: **Abraham Joel Tobias (1913–1996), Sculptural Paintings of the 1930's.** The Zimmerli museum catalog will be available. Essay written by Jeffrey Wechsler, Senior Curator.

O.K. Harris Works of Art 383 West Broadway, NYC, 212-431-3600, Fax: 212-925-4797. Through 4/17: **Keung Szeto, David Giese, R. E. Penner, Greg Ceo, George Tzannes,** 4/24–5/22: **Josef Levi,** paintings; **Keith Long**, sculpture; **Randy Dudley**, paintings; **Mike Nogami,** photographs; **Tino Zago**, drawings.

For space reservations, contact Shannel Myers, 212/925-4738 attention from the works to the alleged relations between the works? In these years, Picasso and Matisse are setting off in multiple directions. By locking them into this chess game, Bois negates the improvisational freedom of their vast achievements. At the end of a chess game, after all, somebody says checkmate. Everything is over. The board is cleared. Isn't that another kind of purification? But this metaphor has nothing to do with Picasso and Matisse. They just go on trying to enrich and to complicate their art. They would have been appalled to find their painting reduced to a game of winners and losers.

Bois's exhibition is an operation performed on—and, I would even say, against—Matisse and Picasso. To understand the animus that fuels this strange endeavor, you have to go back to the beginning of the show. Bois's thesis is that Picasso pulls Matisse out of the trough of neoclassicism. The hostility that Bois expresses toward Matisse's glorious odalisques and interiors of the '20s, with their shifts from volume to flatness and their surprisingly juxtaposed levels of realization, suggests an utter lack of comprehension. His exhibition, which represents Picasso as an anarchic spirit who razzes and energizes Matisse, might better be called "Getting Over Neoclassicism." Yet it is the neoclassical spirit writ large—as a declaration that the past is present, that the essentials we strive for are the very ones we left behind—that has carried artists through most of this century.

Bois's instinctive reaction against neoclassicism goes a long way toward explaining his inability to grasp the nature of Matisse's and Picasso's work in the decades after World War I. The invocations of Poussin, Ingres, Delacroix, and Corot in Matisse and Picasso—as well as in Braque, Gris, and any number of other artists—are only the initial expression of an expansive way of thinking that sustained all these artists for the rest of their lives. Only a few years after the most purified statements of Fauvism and Cubism, they were declaring that purification could imply—indeed, could require—complication, that the disintegration of motifs could provoke their reintegration.

In *Painting as Model*, Bois quotes Mondrian as saying in 1924 that neoclassicism was "an open denial of the essence of the new, which was to *displace and annihilate* the old." Bois likes to underscore a nihilistic element in Mondrian, but I suspect that Mondrian's hostility to neoclassicism was born of a sense that his own Neoplasticism was a competing version of the same idea that in discovering the future you uncover the past. The most

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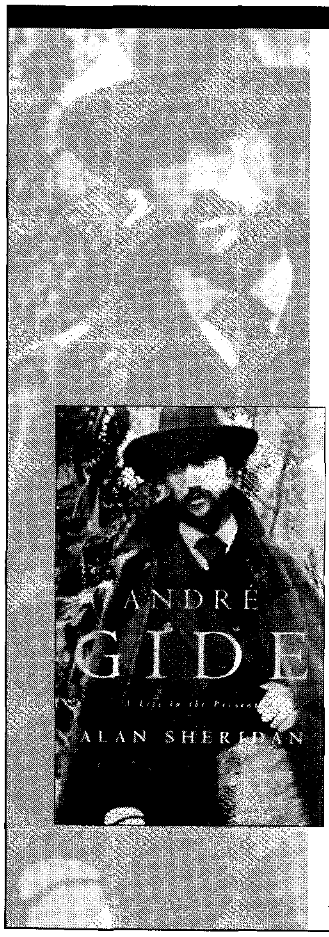
astringent of his black-and-white-and-blue compositions express a Doric fundamentalism that can be traced back to the Greeks, with their insistence on the absolute distinctions between volume, edge, and void. This is not meant to characterize Mondrian as a conservative or an antiquarian, but then I would not characterize Picasso that way when he paints the less-than-glorious *Joy of Life,* with its Mediterranean themes, in Antibes in 1946, nor would I characterize Matisse that way when he draws the miraculous, light-as-a-cloud *Madonna and Child* for the Vence Chapel.

Bois seems to have a naturally curious mind, and like so many other art historians he cannot resist taking a look at what happened to the modern masters after World War I. But the freedom that Picasso and Matisse insisted upon represents a definitive rejection of the reductive models of modern art that Bois and his colleagues grew up with. And the art historians react by rejecting in turn the very adventures that they have begun to explore. Bois denies Matisse and Picasso their freedom by invoking Damisch's chess game. Other historians have other ways. For Kenneth E. Silver, in *Esprit de Corps* (1989), neoclassicism is politically motivated; it is a variety of French jingoism and war-mongering. Michael C. FitzGerald, in *Making Modernism* (1995), regards it as a marketing ploy, as if Picasso and Matisse painted certain things because they would sell. Rosalind Krauss, in her recent *The Picasso Papers,* sees Picasso's Ingresque line as having something or other to do with—of all people—Picabia. What everybody has failed to do is look at the logic of the work and see that the artists who had pushed color and line in new ways in 1906 and 1911 might naturally find in Corot and Ingres a seamless continuity with their own work.

THE ONLY WAY TO MAKE SENSE of twentieth-century art is the way that you make sense of any art since the Middle Ages, which is to look at the imaginative life of the individual artist, and follow wherever it leads. This does not mean that the artist is always right. The viewer, too, has an imagination, which must follow its own logic. The excitement that in this century solidified around Picasso and Matisse, first in studios and galleries, then among a growing audience in schools, museums, and universities, was all about the meeting of imaginations.

The grandeur of scholar-curators such as Alfred H. Barr, Jr. and William Rubin, who dominated the Museum of Modern Art for so many years, had everything to do with the extent to which their scholarship and museology had an imaginative



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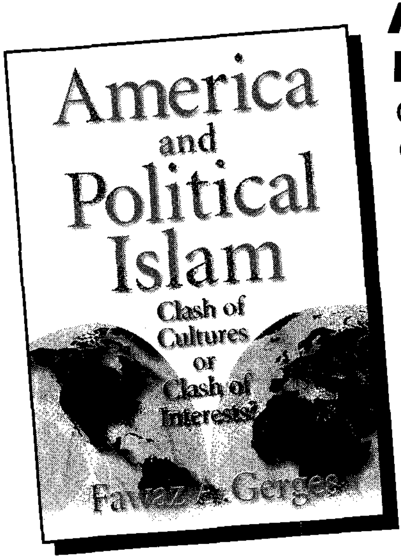

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dimension. The very richness of their insights got our minds going. They grappled with the evolution of an artist's work. There can still be disagreements, of course; Bois might plausibly claim that he is following Barr in rejecting the Matisse of the 1920s. But Bois presents artists as problems to be studied, rather than as creators whose work ought to be experienced. The result is the collapse of curatorial discernment, and for Picasso, who from the '20s on could trivialize his virtuosity one month and push it to new revelations the next, this is a disaster beyond imagining.

What does Bois imagine that he is accomplishing by exhibiting a perfunctory still life like *Coffee Pot and Candle* (1944)? He is not the only curator who is undercutting Picasso. In New York, the organizers of "Picasso and the War Years" have hung, near the exquisite, monochromatic *Still Life with Blood Sausage* (1941), a work as amateurish as *Flower Vase on a Table* (1942). And at the Metropolitan, Picasso's ceramics, with their devilish humor, are given an installation so overblown and grandiloquent that it nearly ruins the fun. This is how Picasso has been presented in the museums since the retirement of William Rubin, whose shows at the Museum of Modern Art—the 1980 Picasso retrospective, as well as "Pioneering Cubism" and "Picasso and Portraiture"—were projects that identified and honored the logic of the artist. You could appreciate the clarity of Rubin's presentation even when you disagreed.

Who is the artist now? In the title essay of *Painting as Model*, Bois begins by wondering "not only what is the role of speculative thought for the painter at work? but above all what is the mode of thought of which painting is the stake? Can one think *in* painting as one can dream in color? and is there such a thing as pictorial thought that would differ from what Klee called 'visual thought'? Or again, to use the language current some ten years ago, is painting a theoretical practice?" There is at least one obvious answer to all these questions, and it is this: if you are asking them, you are so fracturing and intellectualizing the flow of art that you are going to be left with models and postulates and theorems that don't even touch on art as art.

In American museums now, we have Picasso and Matisse as a chess game. We have Picasso surviving the Occupation. We have Picasso as a joker. The artist is thematized and theorized. The art is put in this box or that box. And the more information that is presented, the more rigid the boxes become. Perhaps what is dead is not modern art, but faith in the modern artist. Yve-Alain Bois has denied Picasso and Matisse their individuality. Without that, they are nothing. ■

Martin Filler on Architecture

Eyes on the Prize

FOR TWO DECADES NOW, the Pritzker Prize has mirrored the best and the worst in contemporary architecture. For many observers of the arts, indeed, the very idea of such a prize is deeply problematic. Applying competitive standards to creative efforts is at best irrelevant and at worst destructive, prompting feelings of superiority, envy, and inadequacy among artists already prone to such low and distracting emotions. But high-priced awards, particularly in architecture, have proliferated in recent decades, and the publicity that they generate has grown accordingly.

Though architects were once limited to symbolic prizes given by professional organizations, they are now also eligible for remunerative honors from several private foundations. In 1994, for example, Frank Gehry became the first winner of the Dorothy and Lillian Gish Award, a $250,000 prize for lifetime contribution to the arts. Since Gehry is likely to be remembered as the greatest architect of the last quarter of this century, it would be churlish to point out that he was chosen by a jury that, in addition to the architect Hugh Hardy, included the comedienne Carol Burnett, the actor Roddy McDowall, and the musician John Williams.

The most prestigious award in the building art today is the Pritzker Architecture Prize, which carries a $100,000 honorarium. It was conceived in the mid-1970s by the late Carleton Smith, an eccentric freelance cultural entrepreneur and consultant. Smith proposed that there ought to be a new award created as the equivalent of the Nobel Prize, since the Nobel Prizes omitted an award for architecture—an odd enough conceit, in that only the Nobel Prize in Literature is given for an artistic effort. He first tried to win the patronage of J. Paul Getty, the fabulously rich but notoriously stingy oil tycoon. Smith cannily enlisted the help of two art-world power brokers—the art historian Kenneth Clark and J. Carter Brown, director of the National Gallery of Art—in trying to bell the old fat cat, but to no avail. Little did they know that Getty (who was to die in 1976) had already decided to leave the bulk of his vast estate to create the most lavishly endowed art foundation ever.

Smith hit paydirt in 1979 with Jay Pritzker, the owner of the Hyatt Hotel chain and other extensive holdings, and his wife Cindy. Apart from the sheer hubris of attempting to position the new award alongside the world's most famous series of prizes, there is a further and unintentionally ironic parallel between the two programs. Alfred Nobel, who endowed the peace prize, made his fortune by inventing TNT; and Jay Pritzker, who endowed this architecture prize, made his fortune through the construction of singularly banal buildings (the new Grand Hyatt Hotel in Berlin, by José Rafael Moneo, winner of the 1996 prize, is a notable exception). Still, there is so little public recognition given to architecture beyond professional or industry-sponsored awards that the Pritzker was quickly accepted as the definitive honor in its field, eclipsing its most coveted predecessors, the Gold Medals of the Royal Institute of British Architects (founded in 1848) and the American Institute of Architects (founded in 1907).

THE TWENTIETH-ANNIVERSARY festivities for the Pritzker Prize began last June, with a black-tie dinner for 550 guests at the White House, given by the Clintons but presumably underwritten by the Pritzkers, who had long been major Democratic campaign contributors. At the end of the evening, the prize for 1998 was presented to the estimable Italian architect Renzo Piano by Jay Pritzker. The perfectly orchestrated event turned out to be a last hurrah for the hotelier, who died in January at the age of 76. The year-long Pritzker commemorative celebrations—now with memorial overtones—culminate this May with the opening of a retrospective exhibition, "The Pritzker Architecture Prize: The First Twenty Years," at the Art Institute of

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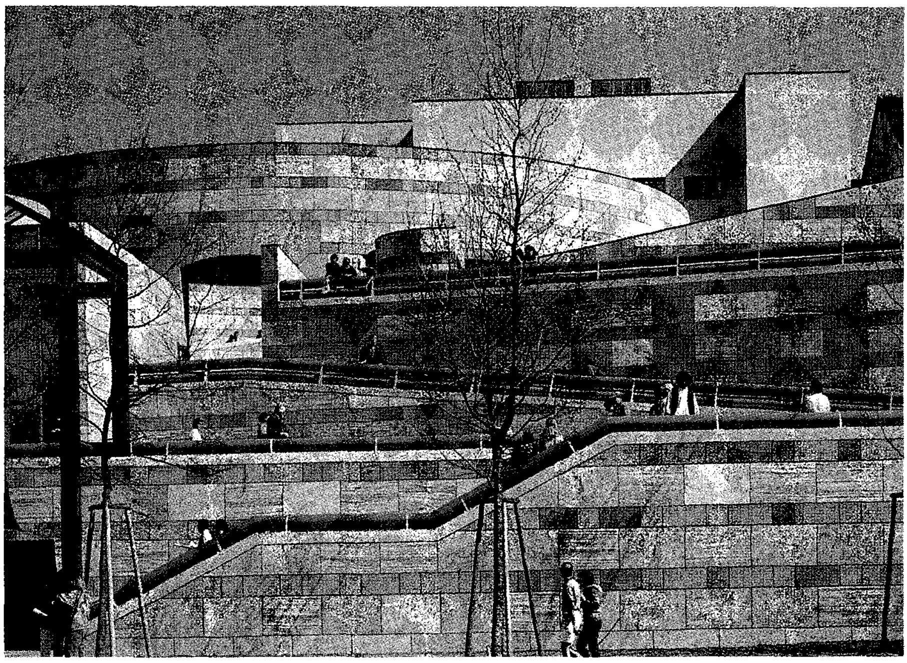
Chicago, in the Pritzkers' hometown. (It will be on view through September 26, after which it travels to the Heinz Architectural Center at the Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh.) The show, a largely photographic display of the winners' work, is accompanied by a heavily illustrated catalog (Abrams/Art Institute of Chicago, $49.50) with contributions by Colin Amery, J. Carter Brown, William J.R. Curtis, Bill N. Lacy, and Martha Thorne. And in Berlin in June, the Pritzker Prize for 1999 will be conferred on Norman Foster, a high-tech Modernist whose rebuilding of the Reichstag, completed this month, is his most prominent work to date.

The Pritzker Prize got off to a dubious start with the naming of its first winner, Philip Johnson, in 1979. At the time, Johnson's selection was widely deemed necessary to establish the credibility of the award. Here was the quintessential crossover honoree, a chameleon-like figure who variously assumes the guise of businessman or artist, godfather or avant-gardist. Who could possibly object to Johnson, the man reflexively referred to as "the dean of American architects?" Or so the first Pritzker jurors—Carter Brown, Kenneth Clark, the architecture patron J. Irwin Miller, and the architects Arata Isozaki and Cesar Pelli—must have thought.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James Stirling, Neue Staatsgalerie, 1977–84

Johnson has been many things throughout his remarkable seventy-year career. He was the first director of the Museum of Modern Art's pioneering architecture department and design collection, and a Nazi sympathizer, and an incisive critic (save of his own work), and a prescient art collector, and a generous donor, and an avid promoter of young talent. The one thing he has not been is a great architect. To be sure, he produced a half-dozen or so excellent designs before he received the Pritzker, but the general quality of Johnson's buildings has ranged from mediocre to embarrassing. The award was presented to Johnson a year after he unveiled his appalling Chippendale-Fascist design for the AT&T corporate headquarters in New York, and it gave a spectacular boost to his marketability at the very onset of the building boom of the 1980s. That practical benefit was not lost on other architects, many of whom came to regard the Pritzker above all as an effective means of gaining new commissions.

A far more satisfying choice for the Pritzker was made on its second outing, when Luis Barragán, the Mexican vernacular minimalist, was named in 1980. Only four years earlier, at the age of seventy-four, Barragán suddenly catapulted from unknown to cult figure on the strength of his reputation-making retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art, a context that emphasized the affinities between his architecture and the minimalist sculpture of the 1970s. He was a most admirable figure, a reclusive artist who had eschewed the international star system and instead quietly pursued his reductive yet sensual work—mainly houses and gardens in his native country—with an obliviousness to the shifting fashions, the political influences, and the economic imperatives that distort so many other architectural talents. Barragán had the further advantage of not being American, unlike one-third of the Pritzker recipients to date, an imbalance the jury has tried to rectify through its sometimes strenuous efforts to broaden the award's geographical distribution.

The winner in 1981, the British architect James Stirling, was then in the midst of creating his masterpiece, the Neue Staatsgalerie in Stuttgart, the most critically acclaimed building of a decade that witnessed an unprecedented increase in museum construction. Stirling, who began his career as a modernist most influenced by Le Corbusier, moved on to embrace a wide array of other twentieth-century sources (including Russian Constructivism). By the late 1970s, however, he had edged toward an abstracted classical vocabulary that would see him transformed, with his Stuttgart scheme, into a full-blown postmodernist. Though he was a fecund architectural talent, the quality of his work was wildly uneven. Despite a few memorable buildings—especially his and James Gowan's career-launching Leicester University Engineering Building of 1959–63, a witty anthology of high-modernist quotations—many were duds or functional disasters. Seven years after his death, he now seems a far less important figure than he did when he won the Pritzker.

AFTER STIRLING, there followed (with some noteworthy interruptions) a series of mainstream American modernists more noted for their synthetic approach to design, and for their corporate organizational methods, than for artistic distinction. The selection of Kevin Roche in 1982 was particularly baffling. As successor firm to the office of Eero Saarinen after his untimely death in 1961, Kevin Roche, John Dinkeloo and Associates never approximated Saarinen's generally high standard of originality and quality. If any of Roche Dinkeloo's work gains a place in future histories, it will most likely be the once highly praised but deeply anti-urban Ford Foundation building of 1963–68 in New York, not the firm's several sinister-looking corporate headquarters in suburban settings. (Roche served as a Pritzker juror from 1983 to 1991.)

As predictable as Philip Johnson's inaugural Pritzker was the selection of the supremely premiable I.M. Pei in 1983. Pei has for the most part avoided the outright kitsch that Johnson has produced throughout his mercurial career, but his bland if consistently adept manipulations of simple geometric forms—especially the triangle (the basis of his East Building of 1971–78 at the National Gallery in Washington) and the pyramid (the iconic

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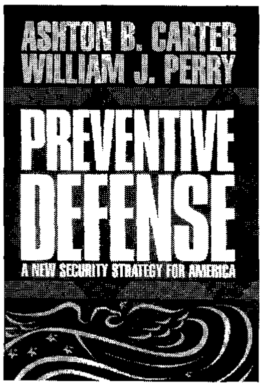

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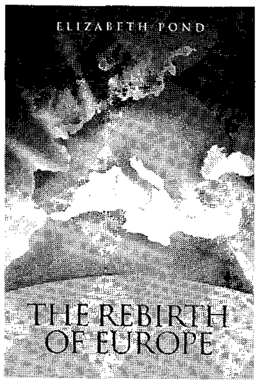

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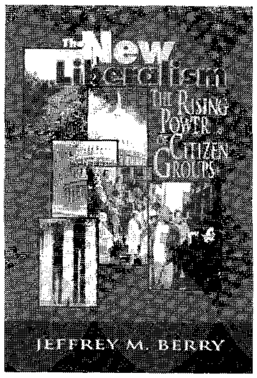

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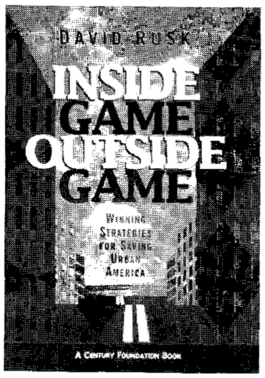
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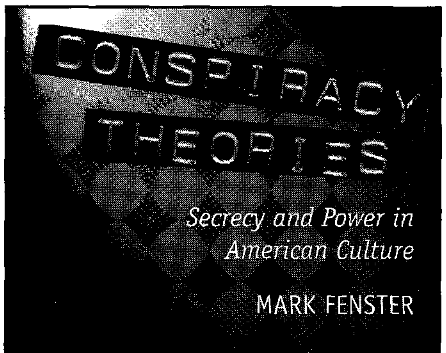
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centerpiece of his 1983–93 renovation and expansion of the Louvre)—have for four decades passed as architectural profundity. Pei's Pritzker successor, Richard Meier, received the award just months before he won the commission to design the Getty Center of 1984–1997 in Los Angeles, the most sought-after architectural project in recent memory. "It was unclear to me how the prize would affect the decision of the Getty selection committee," Meier wrote disingenuously in *Building the Getty*, his memoir of the project, "although it could hardly be a liability."

Despite their surface differences, Pei and Meier may well be viewed similarly in historical hindsight. Both architects pride themselves on their perfectionism and good taste; but their paucity of inventiveness and their obsession with correctness have locked them into reiterative habits that give their cumulative outputs a pronounced lack of development, much like those painters who chance upon a salable formula and stick with it relentlessly.

By 1984, when four of the six Pritzker winners were Americans, there was a strong impetus to widen the geographical range of the prize. How else to account for the choice of the insubstantial Austrian postmodernist Hans Hollein in 1985 and the obscure German omni-stylist Gottfried Böhm a year later? Both are certain to be accorded minor places in the annals of twentieth-century architecture. Then, in 1987, a major juncture was marked with the appointment of the architecture critic Ada Louise Huxtable to the Pritzker jury. During her twelve years of service, Huxtable is said to have become the most influential member, and there are indications, especially in the roster of architects chosen since she began, to support that supposition. At the time of her arrival, postmodernism was in the ascendant, and Huxtable, never an advocate of that movement, was eager to make a dramatic polemical statement reasserting the values of modernism.

During the 1980s, Japan was by far the most exciting locus of innovative architecture in the world, and it teemed with brilliant young talent. Yet the first non-Western recipient of the Pritzker, in 1987, was Kenzo Tange, the arch-establishment elder statesman of Japanese architecture. Tange was the dominant figure of his country's massive postwar rebuilding and the first Japanese architect to gain wide attention in the West. Most famous for his gymnasia at the Olympics in Tokyo in 1964, Tange reinterpreted traditional Japanese architectural motifs with the materials and the technology of Western modernism, as well as a high degree of structural exhibitionism.

In 1988, in the same reparative spirit (and because the Pritzker is not awarded posthumously), the Pritzker was divided between two surviving figures of the glory days of modernism: the 81-year-old Oscar Niemeyer of Brazil and the 79-year-old American Gordon Bunshaft. They never worked together, and their widely divergent approaches made this a piquant pairing: Niemeyer the Corbusian sensualist and Bunshaft the Miesian rationalist. Niemeyer's voluptuously sculptural buildings of the 1950s and '60s for the new capital city of Brasilia were a physical and spiritual world away from Bunshaft's straitlaced early corporate schemes, epitomized by the Lever House of 1951–52 in New York, though his travertine-clad Lyndon Baines Johnson Library of 1969–71 in Austin would have fit seamlessly into Brasilia. The immense success of both men signified the triumph of modernism as it was accepted by government and business establishments in the decades after World War II. By 1988, however, Niemeyer and Bunshaft were decades past their creative prime, and their selection had the retroactive air of a Hollywood lifetime achievement award.

With the ideological score-settling out of the way, the Pritzker then entered its most admirable stretch, beginning with the naming of Frank Gehry in 1989, who was then completing his breakthrough public work, the Vitra Design Museum of 1986–89 in Weil-am-Rhein, Germany. (It has taken the American Institute of Architects a full decade since then to give its Gold Medal to Gehry, who received it in February, three weeks before his seventieth birthday. The conservative AIA—the equivalent of the American Bar Association and the American Medical Association—was no doubt shamed into that long-overdue recognition by the overwhelming praise heaped on Gehry's Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao since it opened a year and a half ago.)

Equally deserving was the Italian Aldo Rossi, who was selected in 1990. Despite his comparatively small number of built works, Rossi (who died in 1997) created a comprehensive and deeply moving vision of architecture through his introspective writings and his huge corpus of architectural drawings, most of them produced as meditative fantasies rather than practical documents. He did not fit comfortably into either the modernist or postmodernist sects. Working in a pared-down classical manner, he maintained his independence from the factional alignments that characterized the style-obsessed 1980s, while infusing the most traditional of Western vocabularies with contemporary

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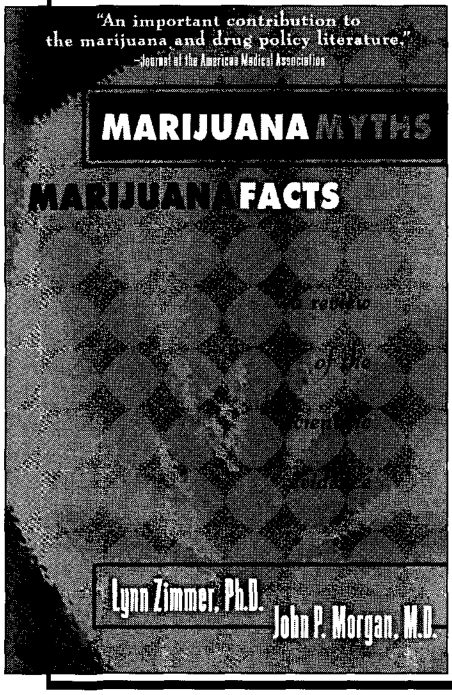
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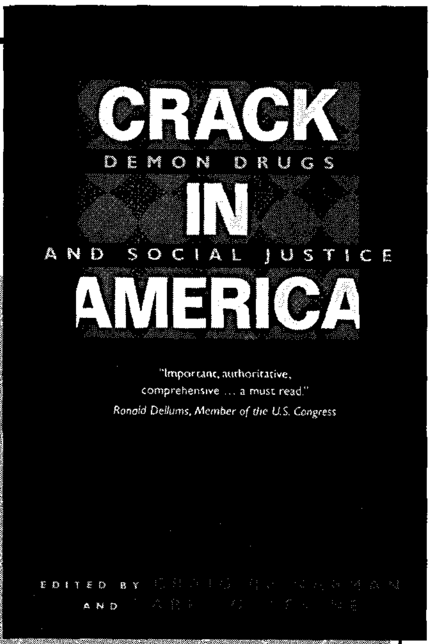
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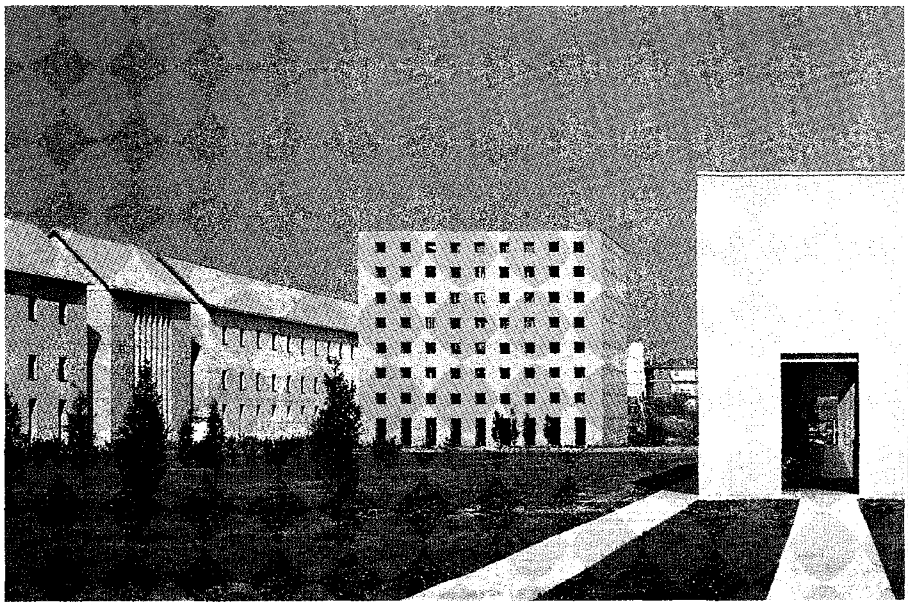
meaning. His Gallaratese 2 housing of 1969–73 in Milan and his Cemetery of San Cataldo of 1971–84 in Modena recall the haunting urban capricci of di Chirico, with their Platonic piazzas and long vistas through shadowy colonnades. Employing the bold, simple geometries of Early Renaissance architecture, Rossi sought to invest modern life with a greater sense of dignity and decorum.

Thus the inevitable favorites have largely dominated the major architectural prizes; but the Pritzker has had distinctly mixed results in identifying less celebrated winners. In an apparent attempt to lower the median age of its recipients, the 1994 prize went to the 49-year-old Frenchman Christian de Portzamparc (the same age as Meier when chosen a decade earlier). Portzamparc's major work, the Cité de la Musique of 1985–92 in Paris, a part of the Grands Projets sponsored by Mitterrand, is a superficially engaging but ultimately shallow scheme, and it is ludicrous to think of Portzamparc as the outstanding figure of his generation in France, let alone in Europe. Other wild cards seem aimed at demonstrating that the Pritzker is not the handmaiden of the international star system. Even architectural specialists were dumbfounded by the naming, in 1997, of Sverre Fehn, a little-known 72-year-old Norwegian who designed his country's pavilion at the Brussels World's Fair of 1958.

Two of the most inspired choices in recent years have been a pair of under-appreciated Iberians: Alvaro Siza of Portugal, who won in 1990, and José Rafael Moneo of Spain, the recipient in 1996. Like Rossi, neither can be easily consigned to a particular architectural coterie. Siza's austere meldings of vernacular form and modern materials give his small museums and school buildings a sculptural intensity never dependent on size for powerful physical impact. Moneo's majestic National Museum of Roman Art of 1980–86 in the ancient Hispano-Roman colonial town of Merida is among the finest of present-day museums, a rare example of architecture that helps to more fully explicate the art displayed within it. What both men share, beyond their immense creative gift, is an instinctive responsiveness to site and a profound respect for the spirit of place.

The closest that the Pritzker Prize has come to a scandal erupted in 1991, when the jury chose the Philadelphia-based Pop architect Robert Venturi but not his partner, co-author, and wife Denise Scott Brown. Together Venturi and Scott Brown have been the most influential American architects since their mentor Louis Kahn, who was the greatest of postwar American architects. (It was Kahn who was primarily responsible for re-establishing the validity of historical precedent in modern design, as well as the heroic view of architecture as an art and not merely a technical profession.) The official reason that the Pritzker committee gave for its exclusion of Scott Brown was that the award is conferred on individuals, not partnerships or firms: it had gone to Philip Johnson but not to John Burgee, to James Stirling but not to Michael Wilford, to Kevin Roche but not to John Dinkeloo. This was not very persuasive. Three years before Venturi, the Pritzker had departed from prior practice in jointly naming Bunshaft and Niemeyer, so exceptions were sometimes possible. In any event, the Pritzker was hardly an institution locked into centuries, or even decades, of tradition.



COURTESY ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO

Aldo Rossi, Cemetery of San Cataldo, 1971–84

By refusing to name Scott Brown, the Pritzker jury lost the perfect opportunity to cite the pre-eminent woman architect of her generation, a practitioner whose central contribution to the output of Venturi, Scott Brown and Associates has been emphasized over and over again by her partner. "There would be significantly less dimension within the scope and quality of the work this award is acknowledging today," Venturi tactfully chided the jury in his Pritzker acceptance speech, "and in the quality of our own design where Denise's input, creative and critical, is crucial."

Also knowledgeable about Scott Brown's collaborative role was Jacob Rothschild, a Pritzker juror since 1987. Venturi, Scott Brown and Associates' Sainsbury Wing of the National Gallery in London was completed in 1991, and Rothschild, then the chairman of the museum's trustees, was eager to vindicate the controversial design, which he had championed. He campaigned vigorously for Venturi among his fellow jurors, and the American was duly awarded the Pritzker within weeks of the wing's opening. Rothschild has said that Scott Brown's participation was essential in bringing the Sainsbury to its successful conclusion, making the decision to ignore her a clear contradiction of his personal experience.

Scott Brown quite understandably boycotted the ceremony in Mexico City at which her partner was honored. "The Pritzker Prize hurt her very much," the couple's son told Andrea Gabor for her book *Einstein's Wife: Work and Marriage in the Lives of Five Great Twentieth-Century Women*. "It meant she would not get the same recognition as Bob, at least not while she is living." Indeed, considering the extent to which the Pritzker snub still rankles with Scott Brown and Venturi, one might ask why he did not reject the prize in protest. The answer is twofold. Until recent years, when their office began to attract a substantial amount of lucrative campus design, it was not very profitable, and the couple needed the award money. In the longer term, they felt it best to swallow their outrage because the prestige of the Pritzker would help them win future commissions, always a problem for architects whose workload has never equaled their high artistic status.

All twenty-one Pritzker winners thus far have been men, the jury's rationale being that in this male-dominated profession there are still few women old enough to have produced a body of built work significant enough to merit the prize. (A minimum of ten completed structures is considered necessary.) Defenders of the Pritzker maintain that its old-boys'-club nature will change once women educated after 1970—when female enrollment in

American architecture schools began to skyrocket—enter the mature phase of their careers, which in architecture rarely occurs before the age of fifty.

But if so much effort has gone into making the Pritzker geographically representative, why has not a single woman thus far been named? I am not an ardent admirer of the work of the Milanese architect Gae Aulenti—best known for her conversions of old structures into new museums, including the misconceived Musée d'Orsay of 1980–86 in Paris and the more successful Palazzo Grassi of 1986 in Venice—but she is certainly more worthy than many of the Pritzker's recipients. Perhaps the fact that Aulenti's largest schemes are renovations and remodelings rather than from-the-ground-up structures has militated against her. Yet adaptive re-use is one of the major issues in contemporary architecture (and a specialty of architects in Italy, where there is little opportunity to erect entirely new public buildings), and so a convincing case could be made for Aulenti on that account alone.

THE LARGER QUESTION, however, is not who has been awarded the Pritzker Prize, but whether this is really the best way to laud the makers of architecture and to increase awareness of the art. Architecture, like filmmaking, is an essentially collaborative medium. Although the principal architect in a firm may indeed function much as a movie director does, and may even be the auteur of a scheme despite the participation of many others in bringing it to completion, it is often fundamentally unfair to single out one member of an architectural office, as the Venturi-Scott Brown debacle demonstrated. In a world ever more in the thrall of celebrity and the industries that feed on it, the Pritzker exacerbates this vulgar trend by encouraging the public to think of the architect as a heroic loner, like Howard Roark, the cartoonish protagonist of Ayn Rand's *The Fountainhead*.

Local pressures can also play a hidden role in determining who wins the Pritzker. Each year the award is presented in a different city at a landmark of architectural significance (and with a Pritzker-owned hotel in the vicinity). The 1989 ceremony honoring Frank Gehry, which I attended, was held at Taido-ji, an eighth-century Buddhist temple in the ancient Japanese capital of Nara. It was an impressive but curious affair, not least for the astonishing remarks delivered by Kenzo Tange, winner of the award two years earlier. With all the charm of a snapping turtle, Tange denounced American cultural imperialism in general and expressed puzzlement at Gehry's work in particular. Tange allowed that at least the new laureate could learn much from the architecture of Japan. The first words uttered by the nonplussed Gehry to his family afterward were, "Was that an insult?"

According to Gehry's account at the time, he and the Mexican architect Ricardo Legorreta (a Pritzker juror from 1985 to 1993) had asked their local hosts to arrange for them to see the buildings of Tadao Ando, based in nearby Osaka and beginning to be touted as his country's most promising younger architect for works such as his powerful Cavern of the Light of 1987–89 in Ibaraki. The Japanese demurred, explaining that by right of seniority, the next Japanese recipient after Tange would have to be Fumihiko Maki (a well-connected modernist who was a Pritzker juror from 1985 to 1988), and only after Maki could the junior Ando even be considered. To do otherwise, they implied, would be a fatal diplomatic gaffe. And this is precisely what happened when Maki was chosen in 1993, and Ando followed him in 1995, both during Gehry's two-year tenure as a juror.

In her introduction to *The Pritzker Prize*, Martha Thorne, associate curator of architecture at the Art Institute of Chicago, accompanies her discussion of today's major architectural awards with a dizzying litany of the small group of architects who have won several of them in various and overlapping combinations. Leading the tally is Richard Meier, who was given the Pritzker in 1984, the RIBA Gold Medal in 1987, and both Japan's Praemium Imperiale and the AIA Gold Medal in 1997. Is Richard Meier, therefore, the greatest living architect?

Not at all. His highly proficient, thoroughly acceptable mode of classical modernism merely makes him an ideal, unobjectionable prizewinner. More than anything else, architectural award panels want to be seen as having picked an obvious winner. This tendency leads to the further promotion of the cult of personality (always a problem in architecture) by honoring architects who have already been honored. As J. Carter Brown, chairman of the Pritzker jury since its inception, writes in the new catalog, "Originally we as a jury were concerned that we might run out of superstars as the prize went on year after year." Brown seems unaware that he has made a very damning admission.

A far more equitable and meaningful approach has been adopted by the Aga Khan Award for Architecture, established in 1977 by the spiritual leader of the Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims to encourage higher standards of building in the Islamic world. Citations are given not to architects but to specific works, which include individual buildings as well as

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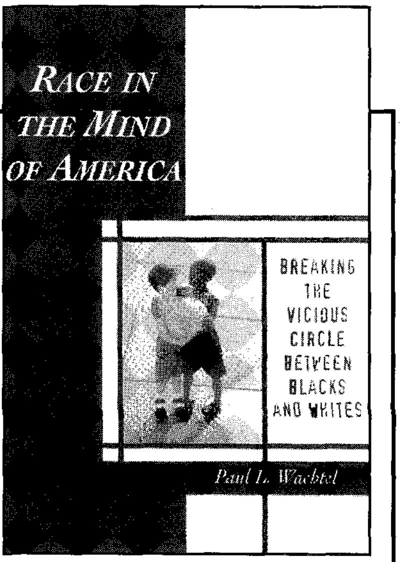
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This eminently judicious but time-consuming evaluation process is reflected in the fact that the Aga Khan Awards are given only once every three years. By placing the emphasis on a diverse range of architecture—each group of winners typically encompasses many different kinds of buildings, budgets, and locales—rather than on the architects themselves, the Aga Khan Award transcends the vacuous celebrity-mongering that is now as rampant in architecture as it is in the culture at large.

TWO DECADES AFTER the inception of the Pritzker Prize, one may reasonably question whether the small fortune spent in lionizing architects has been worth it. Each year, hundreds of thousands of dollars go toward transporting jury members—who currently include the magnates Gianni Agnelli and Jacob Rothschild, the architectural journalists Ada Louise Huxtable and Toshio Nakamura, the architect Jorge Silvetti, and J. Carter Brown—and other Pritzker functionaries to visit the works of nominees. As Huxtable rather haughtily observed, "We go to see the buildings because the buildings can't come to see us." Or, in the fond reminiscence of Bill N. Lacy, the executive director of the prize:

> We would ride in numerous vehicles to see two dozen buildings by architects from Italy, Switzerland, the U.S.A., Finland, Spain, and the Netherlands. This demanding tour would include a dramatic snowstorm in Helsinki, a riotous celebration of Carnevale in Basel, motorboat rides on the canals of Venice and Amsterdam to approach key buildings from the water, and side trips to spectacular classics such as the restored Chiesa dei Miracoli in Venice and in the Netherlands the famous Schröder house by Rietveld, a masterful city hall by Dudok, and the Educatorium by Rem Koolhaas.

It all sounds like a great deal of fun.

But what if those lavish travel and entertainment funds—plus the considerable expense of the annual Pritzker presentation ceremony and the program's public relations apparatus—were devoted instead to activities beyond the mere trumpeting of the winners' names? Even the rare exception of the current exhibition and its catalog amounts to little more than a self-congratulatory celebration of the Pritzker's cachet. Neither the show nor the book advances any ideas beyond the debatable notion of the recipients' excellence.

Again in contrast, the high-minded and effective educational component of the Aga Khan Award has had a demonstrable effect in improving the quality of Islamic architecture during the same period that the Pritzker has merely stoked the global celebrity machine. The more intelligently conceived and thoughtfully administered Aga Khan Award seeks not so much to spotlight first-rate architecture as to suggest how it might be emulated, and thereby puts the narcissistic Pritzker Prize to shame. Surely it would be a far better use of the resources provided by the Pritzker family to support exhibitions, lectures, and publications that could engage a broad public audience in the cause of architecture.

In these times of reduced funding for the arts, museum shows on architecture are less numerous than they once were, and many worthwhile exhibitions are unable to travel beyond their organizing institutions for lack of sponsorship. The publication of serious books on architecture has fallen off during the 1990s, as even university presses turn to more profitable subjects. In failing to do more than publicize individual architects, the Pritzker Prize has succeeded only in placing its winners on a very costly and visible pedestal. For all the Pritzker's noble intentions (and Nobel pretensions), its twenty-year record seems less a milestone than a millstone. ■

Lost in the Punhouse

By JAMES WOOD

The Ground Beneath Her Feet by Salman Rushdie

(Henry Holt, 575 pp., $27.50)

GOETHE MAY FIRST have spoken, in the afternoon of the millennium, of "world-literature," but its existence is quite recent. It was born with modernism, and now flourishes darkly in an age of postmodernism. When writers became exiles or émigrés, when they began to write in their second or third languages, and above all when the experience of this displacement became the subject of their work, then world-literature was born, for better or worse. Salman Rushdie is the probably the purest example of this negative liberty. Literally homeless, Rushdie writes repeatedly about the actual and figurative centrifuges of modern life.

Infamous as a writer to millions who have never read him, Rushdie is ambiguously celebrated, by thousands who cannot read him or who find him unreadable, for the ambitious difficulty of his novels, which appear more or less like Five Year Plans. These books are international language-lakes, in which swim delightful hybrids and odd schools of syntax. Like José Saramago (who, like Rushdie, has offended one of the monotheisms), W.G. Sebald, and Roberto Calasso, all of whom produce balloons of "world-literature," Rushdie's importance lies in his fruitful impatience with conventional fictional narrative, his apparent belief that the novel is not limited by its distinguished genes.

In truth, the Greeks created the first world-literature, when they expanded their world into universal myth. Rushdie has championed Calasso's work on Greek and Indian myth—he has clearly read Calasso with greedy care—and his new novel moves smilingly between various mythologies, Greek, Indian, and the easier mythology of contemporary celebrity. This novel is, among many other things, the biography of two rock stars, Vina Apsara and Ormus Cama, and tells the story of their love for one another, and their near-deification during the 1970s and '80s, when, as the founders of a band called VTO, they became the most famous rock-and-roll act in the world. This tale is told by Umeed Merchant, a photographer who has loved Vina since they were children, and who watches in anguish as Ormus snatches Vina away from him.

But the novel is also saturated in Greek and Indian myth, and pays rich dues to Homer, Virgil, and Ovid. The story of Vina and Ormus is in part the story of Orpheus and Eurydice, because Ormus descends to a kind of hell, and loses Vina at the end. And Vina is in part Helen, over whom men start battles, and in part Persephone, lured by her father's brother to the underworld. *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* is a novel of mythology about mythology, which asks us to compare new myths and old ones, and to test each for their groundedness.

All kinds of criticism can be made against this novel, but it is certainly a considerable achievement, inventive and complex, a student of the ancient myths but beautifully truant with its apparently limitless allusions (to the history of pop music, to Anglican hymns, to various literatures, to popular culture, and so on), demanding in its spiraling anecdotalism, rigorous in its thematic persistence, and idiosyncratically intelligent. It is sentimental and at other times irritatingly anarchic, but the reader always feels a part of the caravan of a true writer's mind, as it travels along oddly. Buoyant, bonhomous, punning, Rushdie's book often imparts a creative joy, the most generous in such free pleasure since *Midnight's Children*. One suspects that it will become Rushdie's most enjoyed book, and (as Joyce promised of *Ulysses*) that it will keep the professors busy for years.

LIKE *THE MOOR'S LAST SIGH*, the new novel is an exiled writer's sigh for Bombay, where the novel's story begins in the 1930s. Umeed Merchant's parents are early property developers of the city; his father, V.V. Merchant, "one of life's subfusc burrowers," who delights in wordgames and artificial languages, is a historian of the city's earliest times. He shares this habit of intellectual archaeology with Sir Darius Xerxes Cama, a flamboyant barrister and sentimental supporter of the British Empire. After the war, Sir Darius, a keen scholar of ancient mythology, labors to cleanse the study of Indo-European myth from its Nazi taint. (Rushdie has praised Calasso's writing for the same hygiene.) His wife, Lady Spenta Cama, who gives birth to the musical prodigy Ormus in May 1937, busies herself with charity work. The two families, Camas and Merchants, become friends, and Ormus Cama and Umeed Merchant grow up in wary proximity.

Into both Ormus's and Umeed's lives comes the beautiful Vina Apsara, half-Indian, half-Greek, who was born in America but moved, in difficult circumstances in the 1950s, to India. Ormus and Vina love each other immediately, though in their relationship they will suffer years of separation. Umeed watches as Ormus goes to London in the mid-'60s (Rushdie provides a funny satire of swinging London: "it may pretend to be swinging but I know it's just plain hanged"), and begins to make a name for himself as a singer-songwriter. During the 1970s, based in New York, Ormus and Vina become hugely famous: contemporary gods. Even after Vina's death in 1989, or perhaps especially after Vina's death, the cult of VTO thrives.

But Ormus and Vina are sucked from below by the unearthly pull of the underworld. Neither really has the ground beneath his or her feet. The title of the novel comes from one of VTO's most cherished rock anthems, "Beneath Her Feet," a snatch of which Rushdie provides: "What she touches, I will worship it. / The clothes she wears, her classroom seat. / Her evening meal, her driving wheel. / The ground beneath her feet." The publicity for the book tells us that U2 will release their version of this song on their next disc. *Cui bono*? On the evidence supplied, Rushdie should cleave to his day job.

Both Ormus and Vina are haunted, as is Umeed, by family disasters—parental suicides, murders, and lies. In Homeric fashion, all three are followed, and finally ruined, by their battling, selfish, quasi-divine parents. Indeed, Rushdie's novel is at its most moving and simple when elaborating Vico's idea that the ancient myths represent the world's childhood, its family album. Rushdie personalizes and inverts Vico's idea, turning the childhoods of Vina, Ormus, and Umeed into mythology, and presenting the parents of these three as godly, larger-than-life characters.

In so doing, Rushdie, who has learned much from Bulgakov and Russian formalism, "lays bear the device," for he makes explicit what is merely implicit in most novels, which is that a writer's childhood, refracted through his characters' childhoods, is godly. As Umeed charmingly explains, "for many Indians, our parents are as gods." The pompous V.V. Merchant and the ridiculous Sir Darius Xerxes Cama are false gods, but still they imprint themselves religiously on their children. And behind Umeed we feel the autobiographical pangs of Rushdie himself, who cannot easily return to Bombay, his childhood city. When you have been exiled from the Alhambra of your youth, as both Umeed and Rushdie have been, then the sepia glow of childhood myth is severe indeed: "When you grow up, as I did, in a great city, during what just happens to be its golden age, you think of it as eternal."

It is difficult to summarize this vital, bounding novel, which moves between Bombay, London, and New York, which connects Plato and earthquakes, rock music and mysticism, and manages to present an alternative history of the last

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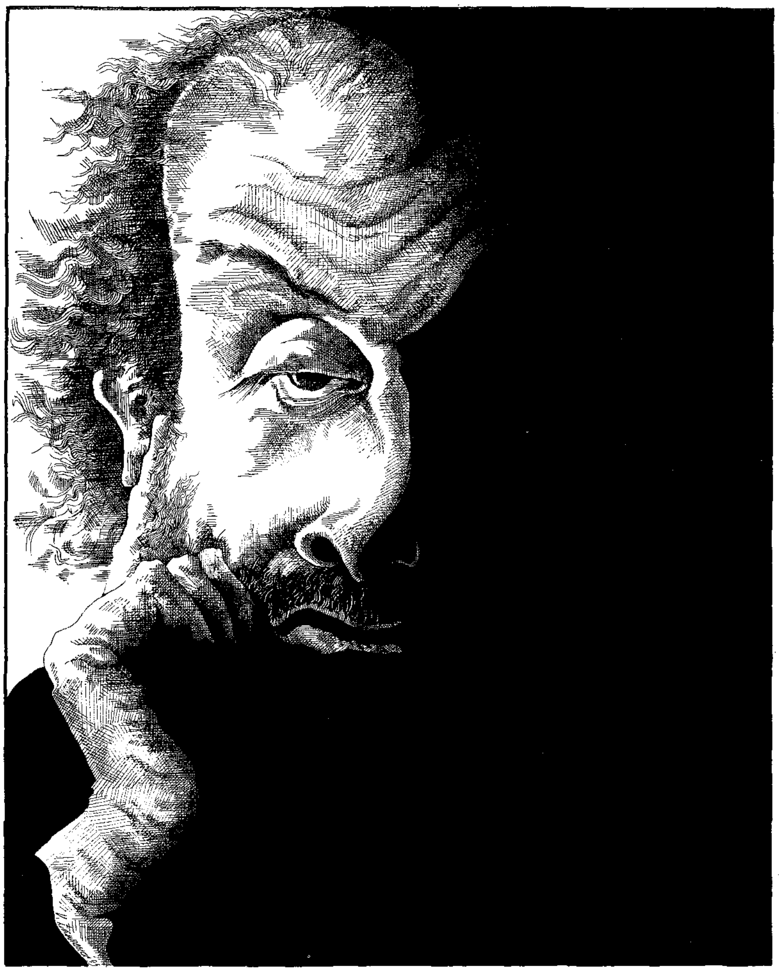
forty years, in which Oswald's gun only jammed, and Pierre Menard actually wrote *Don Quixote,* and the Watergate affair is only a trashy novel of the same name, and most of American literature has been written by the alter egos of our famous American novelists: "Nathan Zuckerman's *Carnovsky,* science fiction by Kilgore Trout, a playscript—*Von Trenck*—by Charlie Citrine ... the poetry of John Shade. Also Europeans: Dedalus, Matzerath. The one and only *Don Quixote* by Pierre Menard. F. Alexander's *A Clockwork Orange.*" And this high-spirited passage in turn continues one of the book's Homeric concerns, which is with twins, doubles, siblings, alter egos, the relationship between the phenomenal world and the otherworld, and of course Plato's two halves of the one soul, embodied in the fabled love-affair of Ormus and Vina.



Salman Rushdie by Vint Lawrence for The New Republic

There is a danger, in all of this, that the dazzled reader, turned by the presence of so much activity, simply credits the existence of pattern, which is how Thomas Pynchon is too often read. This is certainly a ferociously self-conscious novel, so that when one encounters this sentence about Ormus hearing some music—"The music is a great bird calling out to the bird *of the same species that* lies hidden in his own throat, in the egg of his Adam's apple, hatching, nearing its time"—one may be inclined not to notice that it is somewhat forced as a sentence, in the rush to prove it an allusion to the Greek myth that Helen (Vina) was born from an egg, Zeus having visited Leda in the form of a swan. Perhaps Rushdie does indeed mean us to find that reference; there are hundreds like it in the book. But pattern is both the premise of any work of art and the easiest embroidery. To make the figure in the carpet a figure is the novelist's animistic task.

Rushdie, to be fair, does achieve life. He achieves it not in his cartoonish and allegorical characters, but in his language, which is innocently alive, and which he awards to all of his characters, so that they begin to share some of the vitalism of their author. All of Rushdie's characters are word-gamers and punners, and have been from *Midnight's Children* onward. This can create an oppressive sense of a novel without any internal borders, since all the histrionic characters, plus the author, are noisily making the same mummers' music. But it is more often delightful.

Continually throwing off cuttings from its mown prose, the novel frolics in wordplay. Umeed is an angry photographer, "a choleric snappeur," who resents playing second fiddle to the brilliant spectacle, and final demise, of Ormus and Vina: "second-fiddling while Rome burns." Umeed tells us that when he was growing up in Bombay in the 1930s, he assumed that the Art Deco style of many of the buildings was unique to Bombay, an "art dekho," *dekho* being the imperative of the verb "to see." Elsewhere in the novel, the mother-city Bombay becomes "Wombay," and Ormus's mother, Lady Spenta, goes off to have "chariteas" with a friend, morning teas at which the ladies plan their charity work. To this can be added "General Waste-More-Land," a group of thuggish Sikh bodyguards known as "Sikh jokes," Ormus's love of English bread or "bread of leaven," Umeed's term for Vina and Ormus, the "two scoops de théâtre." There is also a young man called Waldo Emerson Crossley, not named, as one might assume, after Emerson, but after a Waldorf salad, "as eaten by his presently divorced parents on the night he was conceived."

This is the Joycean side of Rushdie—the Joyce who made genteel English Tennyson into "Alfred Lawn Tennyson"—and some readers may find it too farcical, or just inconsequential. But the pun is central to Rushdie's metamorphic and metaphoric vision, where words and objects are continually discovering their unwanted political ghosts. The pun is subversive, as Shakespeare's Fools know, because it reminds power that it rests on the instabilities of language, and language is unstable in part because it is so continuously, so democratically in use, like the Vauxhall Gardens. Joyce joked that the Catholic Church was founded on a pun (Peter/*petrus*), thus implying that the rock of ages was just the mineral of a few letters. In fact, Rushdie's novel uses pun in much this spirit, punning indeed on the word "rock" as both the final stability (the ground beneath one's feet) and the unstable movement inherent in the verb "to rock"—the less obviously mobile half, as it were, of the now collapsed binarism, rock and roll.

It is punning that is the engine of this book, that encourages the writer and the reader to make impertinent connections between different objects, and between old and new stories, and which above all licenses the novel's strong vein of anarchic fantasy. We can see Rushdie's verbal freedom put to use glancingly, as in the comment about '60s England that "it may pretend to be swinging but I know it's just plain hanged." More deeply, punning invades Rushdie's discussion of earthquakes. The novel opens with the Mexican earthquake that claims Vina's life in 1989, and the narrator interrupts every so often to offer an idea or two about earthquakes. Umeed notes that their incidence has become more frequent as the millennium ages. Perhaps earthquakes are a kind of mythic curse, or even God's punishment for our Original Sin, since the world seems to be built on the idea of Fault—that is, it lives in error. Again, this is no more than a conceptual pun on the word "Fault."

Or take one of Rushdie's funniest chapters, in which Ormus, having just arrived in swinging London, agrees to work for an American called Miles Standish (references to Longfellow of course ensue), who is running a pirate radio station. This radio station is run offshore, on a boat, and is partly based on an actual English pirate radio station called Radio Caroline, which was set up on a boat as a way of evading British jurisdiction. Miles Standish expands this into a pompously grand, and unwittingly funny, vision: "A complete encirclement of England and Scotland is envisaged, seagoing conditions permitting." It will be a kind of "war" on Britain, promises Standish. Punning on the word, and the idea, of piracy, Rushdie satirizes a certain kind of bogus radicalism, and spins a comedy from the inflated disco-discourse of the 1960s rock world.

RUSHDIE IS ALMOST ALWAYS at his strongest as a novelist when he is most satirical, and weakest when he is earnest, didactic, or merely conventional. His characters do not really exist as human beings, and so when he attempts to make them moving the effect is sometimes sentimental. Yet his punning leads his talents in the right direction, toward a kind of Swiftian ingenuousness, in which the writer always seems to be a little surprised by his own peculiar metamorphoses. It is what Shklovsky called "shaking up the object," as Ivan the Terrible sorted out his henchmen. "It is necessary to turn over the object as one would turn a log over the fire."

The novelist who drew a sharp utopian fantasy in *The Satanic Verses* about how London might Indianize itself if its temperature rose a few degrees, inverts the technique in his new book when he has a servant wonder, in effect, how India might Englandize itself. This Gulliver of a servant innocently asks his master Sir Darius about the state of things in Britain:

> When Sir Darius Xerxes Cama returned from his spirit-destroying trip to England he was interrogated about that country by his butler, Gieve, who had heard certain lies which he knew were too absurd to be true; but he needed Darius to confirm their falsehood:
>
> They say, sir, that in U.K., if a man does not have a job, the government gives him money. If he does not have a house, the government gives him a

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pukka residence, not a *jopadpatti* shack on the pavement but a solid construction. If he or his family are sick, the government pays for the hospital. If he can't send his children to school, the government sends them free. And when he is old and useless, the government gives the good-for-nothing cash money every week for the rest of his life.

The idea that a government might behave in such a way seemed to offend his sense of the natural order. When Darius confirmed the approximate accuracy of the assertions, Gieve couldn't stand it. He smacked his brow, shook his head, couldn't speak for a moment. Then he said, "In this case, sir, *why is anyone in U.K. ever unhappy*?"

The Singer of the Song of Songs

The singer of the Song of Songs sought his beloved so long and hard that
he lost his mind and went out to find her with the help of a simile map
and fell in love with the images he himself had imagined. He went down
to Egypt,
for he had written "To a mare among Pharaoh's chariots I compare thee,"
and he went up to Gilead to see her flowing hair,
for he had written "Thy hair is like a flock of goats flowing down
Mount Gilead," and he went up to the Tower of David, as it is written
"Like the Tower of David is thy neck," and he got as far as Lebanon and found
no peace, as it says "Thy nose is like the Tower of Lebanon that looks out
toward Damascus," and he wept by the waterfalls
of Ein Gedi, for he had written "Many waters cannot extinguish
this love," and he went looking for doves in Beit Guvrin
all the way to Venice, for he had written "My dove in the clefts of the rock."
And he dashed off to the desert, as he had said "Who is that rising
from the desert like pillars of smoke." And the Bedouin thought
he was one of the crazy prophets, and he thought
he was King Solomon. And he is still wandering, a fugitive and a vagabond
with the mark of Love on his forehead. And sometimes he happens upon
the loves of other couples in other times, he even got as far as
our home with its broken roof on the border between Jerusalem and
Jerusalem. And we never even saw him because
we were hugging. He is still wandering around, shouting
"You are beautiful, my bride," as if from within a deep sack
of oblivion. And whoever wrote "Love is as fierce as death"
understood his own simile only at the end,
understood and loved and died.

Yehuda Amichai

translated by Chana Bloch
and Chana Kronfeld

IN SEVERAL RESPECTS, though, Rushdie's novel represents a characteristic postmodern defeat. One notices that Rushdie needs Umeed to tell us again and again that Vina and Ormus are like Greek and Indian heroes. Not only is the amount of explicit reference wearying, but it works against the novelistic, and crushes the human from Vina and Ormus, so that the reader comes to believe about them only Umeed's bullying—that they are indeed mythical figures, but not human figures at all. Modernism was more confident, or more elitist, about such matters. Joyce's characters do not know that they are Homeric, and the reader is not directly informed (other than in the novel's title) about their prehistory. Thus they remain human. Rushdie's characters, by contrast, are too often cartoonish gods.

Allusion, in a work such as *Ulysses*, is certainly willful, but it leaks out gradually, like the resin of something living. It is private, intermittent, and mangled, as it is in real life. Allusion is elusive in Joyce, but it is only allusive in Rushdie. For in postmodern writing—perhaps we should now call it high postmodernism—such as Pynchon's, Rushdie's, and Grass's, allusion is alluded to. What we are supposed to register is above all *the existence of the allusive*.

It is difficult for human beings to exist inside this web, and Rushdie does not attempt to make his characters human in the traditional realistic sense. (An acute problem only arises when Rushdie, like William Gass, wants to extract a human pathos from characters who are not really human.) The vitalism, as I say, is transferred from Rushdie's words and charmingly imposed on his people. This is an acceptable form of bullying, until Rushdie uses his narrator to remind his characters that they do not know enough—that they, in effect, do not belong in the book, which is the inevitable danger of such writerly imposition.

At one point, for example, Rushdie writes of Umeed's mother that "her word games said more than she knew." This is because Umeed's mother has "discovered" that Ormus Cama's name may yield all kinds of buried meanings: she nicknames him Ormie da Cama, after Vasco da Gama, the explorer, "and it was a short step from Gama to *Gana*, song, and between Cama and *Kama*, the god of love, the distance was even less. Ormus Kama, Ormus Gana. The embodiment of love, and also of song itself." Well, this is the human price, the characterological price, that the reader pays for the robust and active presence of the writer, who has decided in advance that the character's "word games said more than she knew."

We accept it because the writer tells us to, and we turn away from the characters, who could not possibly have conceived these puns, toward the writer, who promises to give us more of such fun and games. We develop a kind of learned dependency, and become, in effect, characters of the author, shaped and led by his intricacies. But it is a warning sign, and one is not surprised when, near the end of the book, the narrator says of Vina's father, "Doorman Shetty doesn't know it, but he's echoing Plato," and then continues: "This is what the great philosopher has Phaedrus say in the Symposium's first speech about love." At such moments, the writer seems to be scourging his characters, as Matthew Arnold did the early Romantic poets, for not knowing enough.

Such gestures, of course, not only limit the novelistic, they actually abolish it, since the novel exists precisely to act as the most beautiful absorptive evasion of this kind of discursive writing. When Rushdie communicates to us through the diffuse vitality of his language, moreover, he communicates not as Rushdie-the-man but as a literary person. (No reader really imagines that Rushdie speaks in real life as he writes, or as his characters speak.) But the interpolation of passages of erudition leads us uncomfortably away from the novelistic creation that is Rushdie the joyous writer to the much feebler man called Salman Rushdie, balancing his dog-eared copy of the Symposium on his knees somewhere in London or Long Island and tapping chunks of it into his word processor. Postmodernism, it seems, only knows this

"The human brain today deals very imperfectly with the complex world it has inherited. The brain has built-in biases, blindnesses, deep delusions that may have made life simpler for early Homo sapiens, *but present formidable obstacles to us, whose task is not to adapt to a deteriorating ecology, but to turn that ecology around. Peter Seidel to my knowledge is the first to recognize this dilemma, and he makes his case with admirable verve and clarity."*

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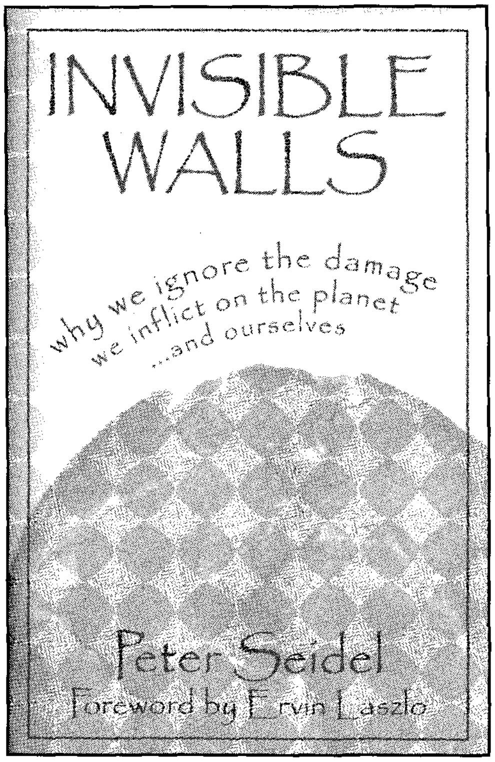
Foreword by Ervin Laszlo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strange clumsy way of beefing itself up intellectually. Like a man who takes so many classes that he has no time to read, postmodernism's very ambition, at such moments, threatens the novel.

And so Rushdie's novel, for all its many delights, suggests at times an important difference between modernism and postmodernism. Joyce's experimentalism, in particular his development of the stream-of-consciousness, was the very culmination of novelistic realism, of the realism that took the human to be its object. The stream-of-consciousness is the stutter of the soul, the novel's noble and finally doomed attempt to represent publicly our intolerable privacies. The tradition from which Rushdie gains most inspiration, though it might seem to be the modernistic, is in fact the eighteenth-century novel, with its buoyant, cheerfully external, picaresque profusions.

Rushdie's variety of postmodern novel, again following Russian formalism (which chose *Tristram Shandy* as the most characteristic of all novels), sees novels as labyrinths of stories rather than as corridors of consciousness. But when this belief is programmatic, as it is nowadays, rather than instinctive, as it was with Sterne, then characters may become victims of a writer's narrative rather than tellers of their own tales. This is a human difference. Rushdie always flies very high, but his seductive ribaldry lacks the ground beneath its feet. ■

East Is East

By RICHARD PIPES

Russia Under Western Eyes: From the Bronze Horseman to the Lenin Mausoleum by Martin Malia

(Harvard University Press, 514 pp., $35)

THE THEME OF Martin Malia's book is stated clearly in the introduction and then pursued for over five hundred pages: that Russia is not different from the rest of Europe, that Russia is in Europe and of Europe, a Europe that has many faces.

In this book that, as Malia tells us, has been in gestation for nearly forty years, he makes many interesting and perceptive observations, but he never bothers to demonstrate his central thesis. Such a demonstration would have required first that he define Europe and then that he analyze Russia's political and social institutions along with her culture to prove a fundamental identity between them. Malia attempts neither task. Instead, he deals almost exclusively with Western opinions of Russia, establishing that these have vacillated over the course of the past three hundred years, sometimes in reaction to events occurring in Russia but more often in response to Europe's own problems and needs. "Russia has at different times been demonized or divinized by Western opinion," he writes, "less because of her real role in Europe than because of the fears and frustrations, or the hopes and aspirations, generated within European society by its own domestic problems."

There is some truth in this assertion, but it is hardly the whole truth. The West's attitude toward Russia has been determined primarily by perceptions of that country's institutions and policies as well as its conduct abroad. Had Malia begun his narrative not with the accession of Peter the Great but two hundred years earlier, when Europe received the earliest travelers' accounts of that distant land, he would have found that originally Europe's own "domestic problems" had no bearing on these perceptions, for at that time Russia no more impinged on the West than did Ethiopia.

If Malia felt that comparing Russia with western Europe exceeded the scope of his book, then at least he should have given the reader a comprehensive and fair summary of the opposite point of view: that Russia is not a European country. But this he also neglects to do. He sweeps the historical literature that advances the contrary thesis into his endnotes and never

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RICHARD PIPES is Baird Research Professor of History at Harvard. His new book, *Property and Freedom*, will be published by Knopf in May.

gives it a chance to make its case. Compounding this omission, moreover, Malia ignores the entire body of pre-Petrine literature on Russia, dating back to the fifteenth century, which has in large measure shaped European perceptions of that country. It is by ignoring these writings that Malia can claim that "Europe's view of Russia as an alien civilization emerged only in the decade following [the Congress of] Vienna." In reality, it emerged centuries earlier. Without exception, early descriptions of Russia stressed that it was as "different" from Europe as any Oriental monarchy. European visitors were struck by many features of Muscovite life, but most of all by the unlimited power of its rulers and the absence of what in the West had been known since at least the early seventeenth century as "civil society."

In his *Skazaniia insotrantsev o moskovskom gosudarstve*, or *Foreign Accounts of the Moscow State*, published in Moscow in 1916, the Russian historian V. O. Kliuchevskii summarized these impressions:

> According to foreign descriptions, [the tsar] stands immeasurably high above all his subjects and in his power exceeds all of the world's rulers. This power extends equally over the clergy and lay persons: dependent on no one, accountable to no one for his actions, the Sovereign freely disposes of the wealth and lives of his subjects. The boyar and the lowest peasant stand as equals before him.... [According to accounts of the second half of the sixteenth century] the Sovereign could deprive [any noble], whomsoever he willed, of title and property, which he himself had bestowed on him, and reduce him to the status of the meanest commoner. All magnates, counselors, and other eminent persons called themselves slaves of the Sovereign and did not feel dishonored when he ordered them to be flogged for something they had done. On the contrary: the victim of such flogging felt highly gratified, perceiving it as a token of the Sovereign's grace. He thanked him for bestowing on him the favor, for honoring him by correcting and punishing him—his servant and slave.

To Europeans, accustomed to the respect due to noble status as well as the sanctity of private property, such behavior recalled the practices of Asia made familiar by travelers' accounts of Turkey, Persia, and the Moghul empire. Thus Jean Bodin, the influential French political theorist, in his *Six Livres de la République* in 1576 listed Muscovy, along with the Ottoman Empire, as a "lordly [or seigneurial] monarchy" under which the sovereign was full master of the "bodies and goods" of his subjects. The people of

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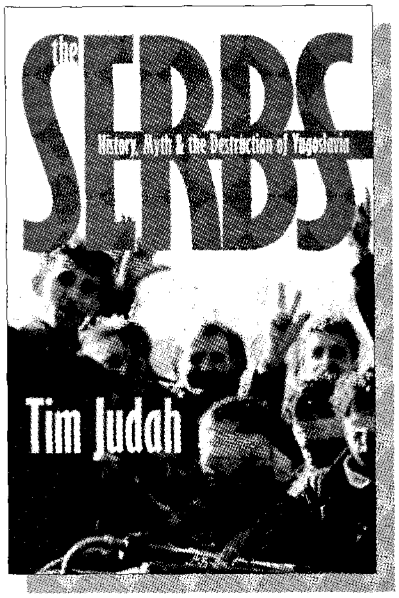

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Europe, he insisted, would never endure such a regime.

These early perceptions of Russia had nothing to do either with "the fears and frustrations" or with "the hopes and aspirations" of Europeans. They were the result of fresh impressions by people steeped in a culture that took for granted certain limits to the state's authority. Unfortunately, Malia gives neither these early observers, nor the commentators of later generations, any opportunity to be heard. He mentions only in passing, as if undeserving of serious attention, those writers, both Russian and foreign, who have argued that Russia differed fundamentally from the West.

TYPICAL OF THIS PROCEDURE is Malia's treatment of the Marquis de Custine, one of the best-known foreign writers on Russia. Custine went to Russia in the 1830s harboring no hostile sentiments. Quite the contrary: his intention was to demonstrate, on the example of Russia, the superiority of the autocratic form of government. What he saw there caused him quickly to change his mind. His *La Russie en 1839* (first translated into English in 1854, during the Crimean War, and republished in the United States ten years ago as *The Empire of the Czar*) has acquired the status of a classic description of Russia. Custine's account has gained its authority not only for its portrait of tsarist Russia, but also for its uncanny premonition of the Soviet Union. Nowhere does Malia tell his readers what Custine wrote, or why an authority of the caliber of George Kennan found his book a remarkably keen anticipation of Stalin's regime.

At a time when Russia was held in the iron grip of autocracy, apparently safe from the turmoil that rocked western Europe, Custine predicted that it would some day experience violent revolution in which the bearded peasants would rise against the beardless gentry. "Russia," he wrote, "is a cauldron of boiling water, well closed, but placed over a fire which is ever becoming more fiercely heated; I dread the explosion." Malia mentions Custine's work often enough, but only to condemn it as "the greatest single source" of "clichés" and "negative stereotypes" regarding Russia, as a "shrill" book filled with "monsters and phantoms." And yet, as Malia himself has noted in his biography of Alexander Herzen, one of his intellectual heroes, Herzen called it "without a doubt the most interesting and intelligent book written by a foreigner about Russia."

As I say, there is some truth in the argument that Europe's perceptions of Russia were at times driven not by objective reality but by Europe's own problems, but this was never a decisive factor. The perceptions of Russia from the fifteenth century onward have rested on realistic assessments of a country and a regime that in most fundamental ways indeed resembled Asia more than Europe. Malia not only fails to refute this point of view, he also hardly bothers (as in the case of Custine) to inform his readers of its substance. He simply dismisses all efforts to stress the continuities in Russian history, especially between tsarist Russia and the Soviet Union, as a vulgar joke. Referring to what he calls the "historical canon" formulated in Europe after 1848 and applied to Russia, Malia writes sneeringly that

> the question [of Russia's relation to the West] is invariably answered with a check list of negatives: Medieval Church and Empire? No. Feudalism and chivalry? No. Renaissance and Reformation? No. If one adds to this a national history that certainly did not culminate in freedom, the verdict is clear: Russia is of non-European essence, and all that is non-European is Asian and barbaric. It is as simple as that.

Well, not quite. There are valid reasons for regarding Russia as a non-European civilization that cannot be so readily dismissed. And to say this is not to condemn Russia to "barbarism." No one claims China to be part of Europe, and yet Europeans have highly regarded China as a great civilization since the days of Marco Polo.

The defining attributes of Western civilization have evolved over the ages and have come to be acknowledged by Westerners and Russians alike. They are not phantoms of a Russophobic imagination. Feudalism, which Russia never experienced, entailed much more than "chivalry." It was a system of mutual relations between lords and vassals of a contractual nature that paved the way for constitutional rights. Subinfeudation—the practice of vassals becoming lords of their own vassals—gave Europe an intricate social structure that contrasted sharply with the ruler-ruled pattern prevalent in most non-European countries, Russia included. Not the least of feudalism's contributions was the notion of law as superior to human will and binding alike on sovereign and subject.

Another essential attribute of the West that Malia ignores altogether is private property in the means of production—until modern times, mainly land. Although it had existed as a marginal phenomenon in nearly all agrarian societies since ancient Mesopotamia, it was only in Europe that the bulk of the land ended up in private hands—first of the nobility, then of commoners. This development forced European monarchs to seek income from their subjects above and beyond the income brought in by their dwindling personal domains. To this end, they had to convoke parliaments; and in the late Middle Ages, parliamentary institutions spread all over Europe, from Iceland to Hungary and from Catalonia to Poland.

I Hear Them Counting

Counting counting, I hear them counting
as if out for the count at the end of the fight. When I was born
they counted to ten and they went on counting. Now the referees
and the crowd have gone home, the lights in the arena are off,
it's a long time since I got up and headed for my life
and they are still there, counting.
The pleasant evening breeze is nothing but
the towel the trainer waves in my face, believing
I'll keep up the fight. Counting counting I hear,
sometimes out loud, sometimes in a whisper
or in a woman's voice making love, sometimes counting
like taking inventory, taking a blood count or a pulse.
Sometimes a countdown or a count-up into the future,
in a solo voice or like a Greek chorus.
And they go on counting, deciphering ciphers before
my death and after it, counting
the spheres of the stars and the uppermost spheres
in a singing higher than high that has no end.

Yehuda Amichai

translated by Chana Bloch
and Chana Kronfeld

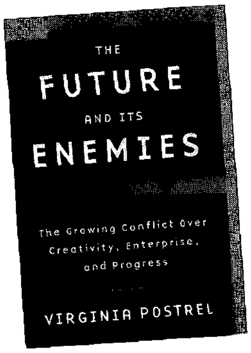
There were also the self-governing urban communities that sprung up in much of the continent during the Middle Ages, giving rise to the concept of citizenship. And last but not least, all of Europe until the sixteenth century shared a common faith, Catholicism, and a common literary language, Latin.

Nothing like this obtained in Russia. With the rise of Muscovy in the fifteenth century, all land turned into tsarist domain and all subjects had to serve the tsar in one capacity or another. The crown had no need, therefore, to convoke parliaments or to issue charters to the estates. Law and the judiciary were not distinct from, and superior to, the government but its instruments. Russia's cities, pitifully few in number, small, and lacking in the right of self-government (prior to 1785), were essentially administrative and military outposts. With its Orthodox faith and its Church Slavonic language, Russia stood outside the common European religious culture. Indeed, it viewed Western Christianity with profound distaste, as polluted by classical influences.

In its social and political institutions, then, as well as in its religious culture, Russia indeed resembled an Oriental despotism, and was perceived as such by most Europeans until at least the late eighteenth century. It is significant also that there was an impressive body of Russian opinion in the nineteenth century, identified with the Slavophile movement, for which Russia was distinctly different from Europe, even if it made a virtue of this fact. Malia briefly refers to the Slavophile ideal of a Russia that followed its own non-European path, but he does not explain why these influential Russian nationalists did not view their country as he does.

According to Malia, Western reactions to Russia over the past three centuries resembled the oscillations of a pendulum. In the eighteenth century, impressed by the efforts of Peter I and Catherine II to Westernize their realm, European intellectuals saw Russia as an enlightened despotism and accepted it into the European community. (Custine warned against such facile inferences when he wrote that "the history of Russia does not date, as the ignorant and superficial in Europe seem to suppose, from the reign of Peter I; it is Moscow which explains St. Petersburg.") Later, in reaction to the aggressive stance adopted by the tsars following the victory over Napoleon, and especially during the repressive and expansionist regime of Nicholas I, the West began to view Russia as an "Oriental Despotism." This perception changed with the accession of Alexander II and the internal reforms he instituted, with the result that in the half-century preceding the outbreak of World War I Russia once again was acknowledged as part of Europe. And then, in 1917, came the fourth swing of the pendulum, which lasted until 1991. The collapse of the Soviet Union has ushered yet another reversal, this time in a manner favorable to Russia's image.

I find this scheme basically correct, though I think that Malia exaggerates the extent to which Russia was adopted by the West in the decades immediately preceding World War I. Much of the suspicion of Russia remained intact even then, and so did the feeling of "otherness." European investors found Russia a profitable market for their capital, and this self-interest induced them to overlook such unattractive features as tsarist absolutism (until 1906), the unrestrained power of the police, and religious discrimination combined with violence against the Jews. The Franco-Russian alliance further smoothed relations; but it was not so much Russia's Westernization that accounted for the new cordiality, at least in French eyes, as the vision of millions of barefoot *muzhiks* in a prospective war converging on Berlin to save France from the invading Germans.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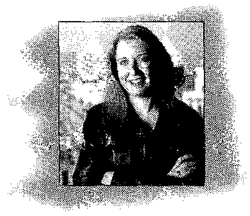

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The difference now was that Europe, feeling spiritually exhausted, no longer looked down on non-European civilizations, African, Oriental, or Russian, but welcomed and absorbed them. Malia makes much of the admiration that European writers and artists felt at the turn of the century for avant-garde Russian literature, art, and music. But Dostoevsky made such a great impression in Europe not least because he seemed so exotic. A Europe conscious of its decadence hailed Mussorgsky and Stravinsky, Kandinsky and Chagall, as savages who injected fresh blood into its anemic culture. Malia quotes Nietzsche: "The mark[s] of the next hundred years: [First] the entry of the Russians into culture. A grandiose goal, the approach of barbarism, the awakening of the arts, the magnanimity of youth, and a fantastic madness and real strength of will." Yet those words hardly justify the title "Russia as Europe Regained," the chapter where they appear.

IS RUSSIA A PART of Europe or not? The question holds more than academic interest. Were Russia as European as Malia claims it was and is, then it would be necessary to explain why it adopted Marxism in its totalitarian guise. Nowhere in the Western world did socialism acquire the extreme authoritarian forms that it assumed from the beginning in Russia. In the West, its home, Marxism quickly abandoned its revolutionary dogmas, dissolving into reformist Social Democracy. In Russia, by contrast, as in other non-Western countries in which the soil was lacking in Western traditions of limited government and private property, it gave rise to the most extreme forms of oppression.

A Westernized Russia should have made the transition from communism to democracy and capitalism as readily as, say, Poland or Hungary. Yet the real Russia has failed to do so, and now languishes in a state of political, economic, and spiritual crisis to which there is no apparent solution. Malia remarks on the fact that, after the collapse of the communist regime, the country found itself "without any structured Russian civil society to take its place." In post-Nazi Germany, by contrast, where the "basic components of civil society" had survived Hitler, Adenauer could accomplish his "economic miracle" with remarkable speed. True enough; but it was due not only to the uniquely savage and prolonged depredations of Leninism and Stalinism. For exactly the same situation had occurred in 1917–18. Then, too, the collapse of the Russian government brought about instant anarchy because there was no civil society to step in its place. In Germany after World War I,

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however, the breakdown of the Hohenzollern monarchy led in a matter of weeks to the establishment of a more or less effective central authority. Surely the reason is that Russians were never given the chance to develop a civil society—neither under tsarism nor under communism—whereas the Germans had had a civil society since the Middle Ages.

All of which suggests that the West's perceptions of Russia were determined not only or even primarily by "its own domestic problems," but by objective realities, and reality is not just in the eye of the beholder. The basic trouble with Malia's book is not only that it is sheer intellectual history—history which sees ideas as history's driving force—but also that it is intellectual history of a particular kind. Malia seems to follow the fashionable view, originating in France, that there is no such thing as objective reality whose properties exist independently of the observer; that there are only opinions and perspectives that are driven by the observer's needs or interests. If he did not think that this is so, surely he would have used the space that he has squandered on such marginal subjects (in this context) as Voltaire, Hegel, and Nietzsche to discuss Russia's actual institutions and their history.

Malia's longest chapter is his last one, devoted to the Soviet Union and the cold war. It is preceded by a short chapter called "War and Revolution," which says little about either war or revolution but a great deal about Marx and Lenin. What little allusion there is here to the events of 1914–17 is not always reliable. Malia seems to be under the impression that during World War I the Russian monarchy ruled the country without the parliament, or Duma. In fact, this assembly was repeatedly convened in 1914–16, causing the crown no end of trouble. It is equally incorrect to say that the 1917 Revolution "began with the socialists, not the liberals, in the vanguard." In fact it was ignited by the Progressive Bloc in the Duma, where an unprecedented coalition of conservatives, liberals, and radicals forged during the November 1916 parliamentary session virtually charged the tsarist government with high treason, creating a political climate that made its further functioning all but impossible. The structure of the Bolshevik Party, which Lenin modeled on the People's Will, Russia's revolutionary party of the 1870s, to which his brother had belonged, is for no apparent reason said to be based on that of the German Social-Democratic Labor Party.

The chapter on the Soviet Union gives a straightforward account of the genesis of this regime and the shifting attitudes toward it abroad. There are some interesting insights into the phenomenon of socialism. Malia rightly observes that the term "socialism" and its derivative "communism" are unique in that, unlike comparable terms designating an existing type of society ("feudal," "liberal," and so on), they were coined before and not after their emergence. And yet "such is the potency of the socialist aspiration" that the two have been and continue to be used as if they were descriptive of reality. Malia observes with similar insight that the exclusive national and racist doctrines of Nazism required military conquest, whereas "the world reach of Soviet Moscow rested on manipulation of the moral conscience and antifascist sentiments of the liberal world. Thus the West was ultimately able to answer Hitler in his own crude military terms, but to answer Communism proved to be a far more complex matter, as the decade-long American disaster in Vietnam demonstrated."

MALIA IS GUILTY OF A serious omission, however, in dealing with Western reactions to Soviet communism, in the absence of any discussion of the Reagan administration. Reagan was certainly no intellectual, but he had strong moral and philosophical feelings about communism, and, unlike most of the other figures mentioned in the book, he was in a position to do something about them. It is particularly puzzling that Malia does not mention Reagan's speech in London in 1982, in which, resorting to Marxist terminology, he predicted the collapse of communism on the grounds that its political system no longer conformed to its social and economic base, which to those familiar with Marxism spelled revolution. This was unprecedented language for an American president. Reagan's understanding of communism and its prospects certainly had more impact on the destiny of Russia than the musings of Sartre or Spengler.

In dealing with the Soviet Union, Malia plays down the influence of its social base and its politics in favor of its ideology, or, more narrowly, of the regime's monopoly of language. Eliminating the quest for power as a significant factor in the explanation of this dictatorship, he calls the communist state sometimes a "logocracy" and sometimes an "ideocracy," that is, a country ruled by words or ideas: "Communist Russia was as surely governed logocratically, by the Party's monopoly of the Word, as by the KGB or the *nomenklatura*." This strikes me as an intellectual conceit. Every profession likes to claim for itself a commanding role in human affairs: businessmen stress economics, generals stress military power, politicians stress politics, and intellectuals stress

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ideas. In all these instances, a partial truth is stretched to appear as the whole truth.

It is undeniable that the communist regime in Russia, when it was in full bloom, controlled the public expression of ideas and even of words to an extent that had no historical precedent. But this was a device intended to create the spurious impression of unanimity in a society that was anything but unanimous: a society which, owing to the prohibition imposed on the open discussion of public issues, was in fact unusually fragmented. Anyone who established personal connections with Soviet citizens quickly realized that, all their outward conformity notwithstanding, they had no difficulty distinguishing official lies from the truth.

The citizens of the Soviet Union were intellectually schizophrenic, at any rate until the emergence of open dissent in the 1960s. They pretended to conform, while holding their private and often strong opinions to themselves, and sharing them only with family and trusted friends. To say that they were dominated by the "logocratic Lie" is grossly unfair. Every half-intelligent Russian knew better, if only because he could compare the reality as it affected his own profession or occupation with the official claims.

Malia also greatly overestimates the role of ideology in Communist systems, in which respect he follows in the footsteps of Solzhenitsyn. The *nomenklatura*, the top echelon of the Communist Party that ran the Soviet Union since the early 1920s, a class of the classless society that Malia barely mentions and nowhere analyzes, was a brotherhood not of ideas but of privilege. In the lawlessness that Lenin unleashed in October 1917, membership in the party provided some guarantees of survival, and people enrolled in it in droves for that reason. Party affiliation placed them above the law (such as it was), in that they could not be tried for crimes by ordinary courts but only by the party's own disciplinary organs. And they alone had the right to bear side-arms.

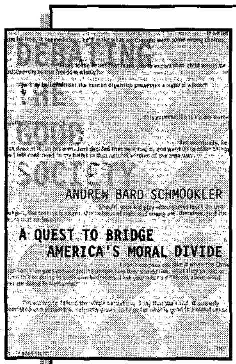
Once inscribed in the *nomenklatura* rolls, they enjoyed access to additional food rations—no mean matter at a time when much of the country was going hungry. In due course came other privileges. In 1920, Adolf Ioffe complained to his friend Trotsky of the widespread pursuit of worldly goods by party members:

> From top to bottom and from bottom to top, it is everywhere the same. On the lowest level, it is a pair of shoes and a soldier's shirt; higher up, an automobile, a railroad car, the dining room of the Council of Peoples' Commissars, quarters in the Kremlin or at the National Hotel; and on the highest rungs, where all is available, it is prestige, prominent status, and fame.

Even Lenin, who was relatively modest in his personal appetites, appropriated for himself a luxurious private villa on the outskirts of Moscow and disposed of a fleet of half a dozen limousines. Trotsky took up residence at Arkhangelskoe, the sumptuous estate of the Yusupovs, one of the wealthiest families in pre-Revolutionary Russia. One needs only to compare photographs of the Bolshevik leaders in 1917 and 1922: after five years in power, the trim revolutionaries waxed positively fat, and this at a time when over five million of their subjects had died of famine.

Lenin was well aware of the low caliber of the people who enrolled in his party during and immediately after the Civil War, but he had no choice in the matter: he needed bodies to run the totalitarian empire that he was establishing. A survey of party members carried out in 1922 and published in *Pravda* showed that only 0.6 percent had completed higher education, and only 6.4 percent had secondary school diplomas. Analyzing the evidence, one Russian historian concluded that 92.7 percent of the party's members were functionally illiterate (4.7 percent were literally illiterate). Can one imagine people

from morality to the wickedness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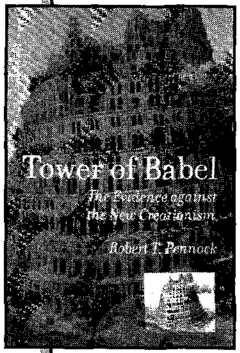

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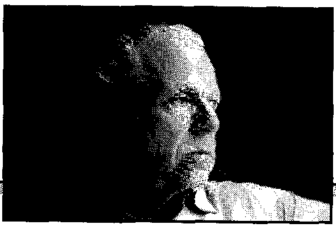

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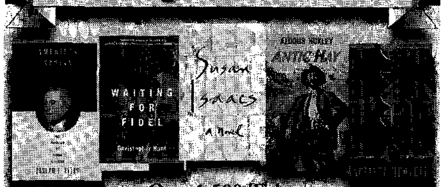

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with such a low level of education caring one way or another about Marx's *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon*, or being motivated by ideological zeal? Ideology for them reduced itself to strings of party slogans. At a seminar at Harvard in the 1950s, Raymond Aron remarked that "ideology" in the Soviet Union boiled down to two propositions: that communism is good and capitalism is bad; and that communism will vanquish capitalism. He was right. Party members were animated by formulas, or attitudes, or beliefs, but hardly by an ideology.

I find similarly unpersuasive Malia's claim that the source of the East-West conflict during the cold war was ideology. Ideology had little to do with it, even if Moscow liked to depict the conflict in such terms. The United States cared not one whit about Soviet ideology, because its decision-makers did not believe that ideas play much of a role in politics. With the sole exception of Reagan, American presidents were quite content to ignore communist theory as long as Moscow did not use it as an excuse for expansion. NATO's exclusive concern was with Soviet expansion and military build-up, which indeed threatened its national security: had Russia succeeded in establishing dominion over western Europe or the Middle East, the balance of global power would have shifted dramatically in its favor. It was only very gradually that the idea gained acceptance in Washington, over the strenuous resistance of the academy and the State Department, that the interests—I say the interests, not the ideology—of the *nomenklatura* required totalitarianism at home and expansion abroad, for which reason it was necessary for the United States to goad Moscow toward internal reform. This radically new policy was formulated in National Security Decision Directive 75, which was signed by Reagan in January 1983.

The conclusion of Malia's book expresses general optimism about Russia's future. To be strong, he writes, Russia cannot take a separate path, but should "complete her real convergence with the West." There is not much likelihood of the country reconstructing its lost empire. Russia must above all become rich—"wealth, rather than power, is for the first time a serious alternative for Russia"—and this is an objective that implies a reorientation of Russian policy inward. These are sensible observations, recommendations, and hopes. But given the persistence in Russia's culture of non-Western institutions and attitudes, a good dose of caution is surely in order. The rising tide of anti-Westernism in Russia suggests that its citizens are far from being as confident of their European credentials as is the author of *Russia Under Western Eyes*. ■

The Power to Enchant

By Frank Kermode

Later Auden
by Edward Mendelson
(Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 570 pp., $30)

W.H. Auden: A Commentary
by John Fuller
(Princeton University Press, 613 pp., $35)

The poet Auden, though not an immodest man and even in some ways a humble man, decently enjoyed his fame, and he would have been pleased, though probably not surprised, by the volume of posthumous attention that his life and works have received. There are two large-scale biographies, by Humphrey Carpenter, which appeared in 1981, and by Richard Davenport-Hines, which appeared in 1995. The life of a man so profound, so prodigious, so industrious, so silly, and in the end so sad, is worth telling twice, and it will doubtless be told again. Even Auden's juvenilia have been well edited, and valuable additions to knowledge are regularly provided by a high-class *Newsletter* and an excellent series of *Auden Studies*, edited

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Frank Kermode is the author, most recently, of *Not Entitled* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux).

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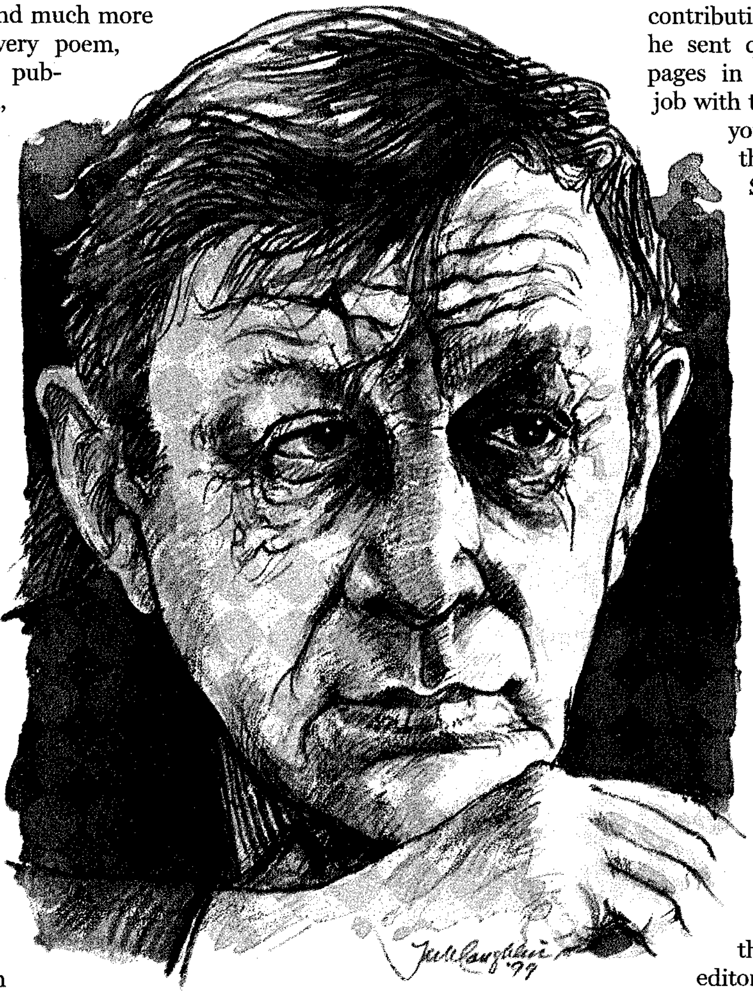
by Nicholas Jenkins and Katherine Bucknell. And now we have two new books that reinforce the proposition that the scholarly requirements of no other twentieth-century poet have been met so sedulously.

John Fuller, himself a poet and a novelist, teaches at Oxford and has a specialist's knowledge of eighteenth-century poets. He is also celebrated for his large store of unusual and out-of-the-way information on other matters. This accomplishment is useful to a commentator on a poet such as Auden, who was learned in peculiar ways. Fuller published his first commentary on Auden's poetry in 1970; this one is twice as long and much more helpful. It deals with every poem, collected and uncollected, published and unpublished, and it has a lifetime of often curious reading behind it, for Auden leads his commentators down many strange and sometimes dark lanes. Henceforth nobody who wants a richer understanding of this great but often willful poet can dispense with Fuller's assistance.

Auden sometimes behaved oddly in his last years, but one unsilly act of the poet was to make Edward Mendelson his literary executor. Mendelson has done the job justly, with exemplary generosity to other scholars, but he has also undertaken a full-scale edition—poetry, drama, opera, prose. This work, still in progress, is of unchallengeable authority. Now he has completed his critical biography. *Early Auden*, which broke off the narrative around 1938, appeared in 1981. This book carries it on to 1973, when Auden died.



W. H. Auden by Jack Coughlin for The New Republic

The earlier book was about the English Auden, and this book is about the American. Auden arrived in the United States in 1939. He did not become an American citizen until 1946, but by then he was a pretty complete New Yorker. His recent travels had included a visit to China that he came to regard as somehow inauthentic—"the false journey is really an illness," he remarked. He now decided to settle down not in England, which, however disgusted he became with it, he still loved, but in New York, a city that he might well have been expected to hate.

Though he deplored the fact, there was always something of the magician about Auden (he disliked the idea of poetry being mistaken for magic), and soon enough he made his way into glittering intellectual circles. Already something of a sage, he was also a postulant, always learning, always allowing new ideas to change his mind. Under the influence of Reinhold and Ursula Niebuhr, he was with some urgency thinking his way through to a new religious position. The early years in New York were crammed with work and strenuous thinking, to say nothing of a deeply serious love affair. Mendelson has had to devote as much space to the years 1939–1947 as to the remaining quarter-century of Auden's life.

Mendelson's book is meant to be read right through, whereas Fuller's plainly is not; indeed he himself advises against any such attempt. Yet there is an inevitable overlap between the books. Each author warmly acknowledges the help of the other, and both have shared in some of the same tough research. How tough and minute it needed to be may be illustrated by their handling of one nightmarish problem, dealt with here by Fuller, and by Mendelson in the first volume of his edition of Auden's prose. This is the poem "Auden and MacNeice: Their Last Will and Testament," in *Letters from Iceland* (1937).

A long poem, written in rather rough-shod terza rima at the end of 1936, it is full of enigmatic allusions to contemporary events and figures, the events often quite private and trivial, and most of the figures quite forgotten. Neither MacNeice nor Auden even reprinted it, doubtless treating it as a joke, or supposing that it would inevitably lose interest as time went by. Mendelson's notes (co-authored with Richard Davenport-Hines, and with contributions from Auden fans to whom he sent questionnaires) run to twenty pages in small print; Fuller does the job with twelve. From these annotations you can learn, for instance, that the new Geological Museum at South Kensington took over the fossil collection of the Jermyn Street Museum of Practical Geology in 1935; that the Oxford Professor of Byzantine and Modern Greek may have introduced Auden to string figures; that Sir Bindon Blood was appointed chief royal engineer at the age of ninety-three; that the "cottage" in Piccadilly was the men's lavatory in the Underground station; and that the medieval bridge at Crowland crosses a river that is no longer there.

There are pages and pages of this kind of thing. Some names are now remembered only for reasons that could not have been guessed at in 1936: Anthony Blunt and Guy Burgess, for instance. Fuller notes a lot of this, but Mendelson is marginally more patient, and his notes are a triumph of pure scholarship: the facts were there and it was an editor's job to dig them out, however much trouble it might take, and even if very few people could be expected to care. A few puzzles remain for any gleaners. No doubt some will be solved in future numbers of the *Newsletter*.

Auden claimed that "His guardian-angel/has always told him/What and Whom to read next." Sometimes this meant that the teachings and the mantras of some particular sage would color his writing only for a relatively brief period, but he was capable of being faithful for years. Anthony Collett's book *The Changing Face of England*, published in 1926, came out in a cheap edition in 1932, and left its mark on both the Prologue to *On This Island*, written in that year, and the splendid panoramic opening chorus of *The Dog Beneath the Skin*, Auden's collaboration with Isherwood in 1935. You can see why: Collett's is a wonderfully well-written book with an almost poetic interest in geology, a subject in which Auden had a fully poetic interest. And at this date he was, to borrow a phrase of Fuller's, "unafraid of magnificence." He borrows chunks of Collett's prose, sometimes with little change, and serves them up in grandiloquent verse that owes much to Paul Claudel, another of his interests at the time. What is remarkable is that Collett, who disappears from view around 1935, turns up again in 1948, as Fuller and Mendelson duly observe, in the famous poem "In Praise of Limestone." Thus he made an incursion into a quite different phase of Auden's life. Perhaps the poet had looked again at Collett; perhaps it was just the thought of limestone that brought him back to mind.

Always ready to plunder other writers, Auden read enormously, and some books took a strong hold on him. One such book was Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy's *Out of Revolution: Autobiography of Western Man*, a book published in 1938 and described by Fuller as "an unusual and now forgotten effort [forgotten by everybody except Fuller and Mendelson, one presumes] to make *weltgeschichtisch* sense of revolutionary movements in history." The half-dozen quotations from this author that Auden includes in his commonplace book *A Certain World* (1970)—a "map of my planet" as he calls it—are not very impressive. One needs no guru to explain that "three-quarters of a soldier's life is spent in aimlessly waiting about." But Mendelson points out that one of the revolutions believed by Rosenstock-Huessy to have advanced the Second Coming was the institution in A.D. 998 of All Souls, a feast not celebrated in Protestant churches but greatly valued by Catholics, as anyone will testify who has tried to fly anywhere from an Italian airport on the previous day.

This particular "revolution," which instituted a universal celebration of death rather than attending to a single saint, greatly impressed the poet; and he took note of the other revolutions that his mentor described. Always troubled in his post-Marxist days by the apparent disorder of history, he admired writers who could discover purpose or pattern in it. So he read the whole of Arnold Toynbee's *Study of History*, having, as Mendelson remarks, a taste for "polymathic generalizers." Reading Rosenstock-Huessy's book, he felt it had been written especially for him. In the same way he valued Hannah Arendt's *The Human Condition*, because it expounded his own ideas about vocation and alienation.

For poets must have ideas: "A man is a poet if the difficulties inherent in his art provide him with ideas; he is not a poet if they deprive him of ideas." The poet will welcome echoes of those ideas wherever he finds them: in Kierkegaard, for example. Sometimes you can see why a particular remark hit the spot, as when Kierkegaard says that "most people believe that the Christian commandments (e.g., to love one's neighbor as oneself) are intentionally a little too severe—like putting the clock ahead half an hour to make sure of not being late in the morning." This was an observation after Auden's own heart, even before his later years, when punctuality became a mania.

Some of Auden's other intellectual infatuations call for more elaborate explanations. The list of Auden's authorities is long—from Homer Lane and Gerald Heard (*The Ascent of Humanity*) in early life to A.T.W. Simeons (*Man's Presumptuous Brain*) in late. He was a tremendous worker: an unusually productive writer but also a productive reader. Uncannily well informed about almost everything from medicine to theology, he thought continually about what he read, and he tried to make sense of his knowledge as a whole. And since he was inescapably a

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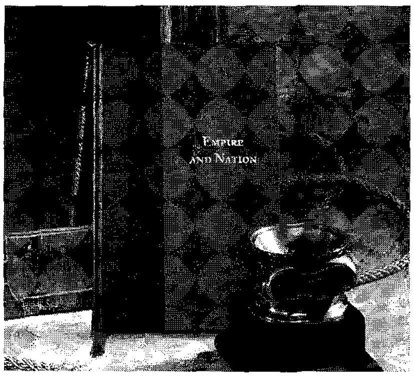

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Forrest McDonald is Professor of History at the University of Alabama and author also of ***E Pluribus Unum,*** among other works.

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poet, his ultimate way of making sense of his knowledge was by writing poetry.

The beauty of Mendelson's book is his patient tracking of these processes. He reverses the guardian-angel relationship: what Auden was told to read next, he, Auden's posthumous guardian angel, reads next in his turn. Almost as soon as he arrived in New York, Auden returned to Christianity, but in a form very different from the Anglo-Catholicism of his mother. He learned much from Niebuhr, especially about the relation of Christianity to politics. Mendelson calls his newly acquired religious position "a lonely existentialist Protestantism."

At about the same time, he began to show a certain distrust of the trade of poet, finding reasons to think it unethical, though sure that he was a poet and could be nothing else. His conscience urged him to act as if he loved his neighbor, but his sense of vocation, his belief in his "gift," was very strong, and it seemed to conflict with the ethical imperative. He spoke admiringly of Milton's gift, which did not seem to hinder Milton's moral actions, and he nursed a secret sense that he was meant to be a leader of men. The mistrust that accompanied this conviction was based on a fear that poetry was self-centered, incapable of standing up against the terrors of history and the real world.

Was poetry, in the end, all feigning? What can it have to do with loving one's neighbor? "History opposes its grief to our buoyant song," he wrote. If you contemplate seriously the terrors of history, you may be forced to say, as Auden did in his elegy for Yeats, that "poetry makes nothing happen." At best it might heal, console, and liberate; and even this saving clause lost its efficacy in the course of time. Yet still the poems kept coming. His "gift" could not be renounced, even when seen as "indifferent," in Mendelson's words, "to public disasters." In fact, the gift never quite failed, but his mistrust of it led him to be, on occasion, quietly boring rather than curative or liberating.

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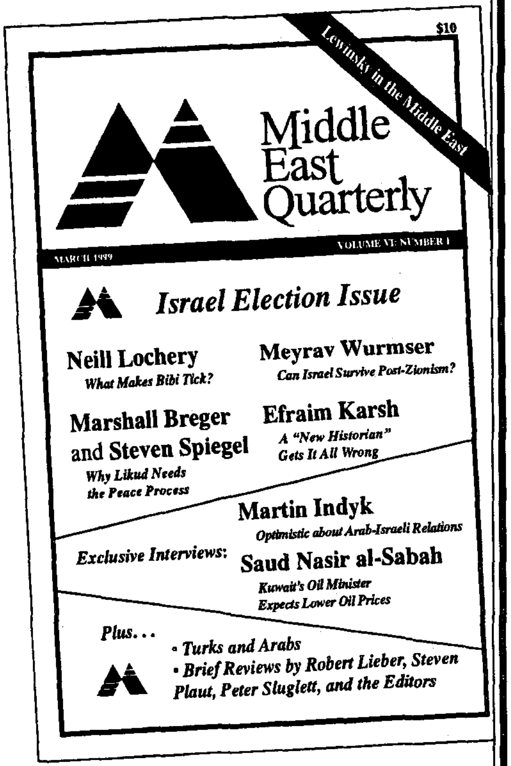

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MENDELSON IS often quite severe on his author, finding some poems "clumsy and complacent," others "evasive." Speaking of Auden's temporary interest in the contemplative saints, he says sharply that "they briefly but disastrously took over much of his work, and they ruined every poem they touched." Auden wrote a vast number of poems, and it is inevitable that some should be ruined by one obsession or another; his willingness to point this out makes Mendelson's commentary all the more persuasive. On the whole he likes the post-1939 poems better than the early work that made Auden's first reputation. If I wanted to qualify my admiration for his book, I would say that he finds it hard to do justice to poems that Auden himself disliked and rejected as "grand, emphatic, and false." Auden was not an infallible judge, though he was an honest one.

The turn—the moment when early, opinionated virtuosity came to be tempered by self-critical maturity—is said to have occurred just after "September 1, 1939," a poem in which the poet detected the sort of falseness he came to attribute to Yeats. The new style is announced in the elegy on Freud. Both Mendelson and Fuller point out that this remarkable poem—with its marvelous conclusion, "Sad is Eros, builder of cities, / And weeping anarchic Aphrodite"—is Auden's first attempt at syllabic verse. Auden learned about it from Marianne Moore (though he did not use her complex stanzas); and as Mendelson says, the Freud elegy and later poems combine "the dignity of regular forms with the intimacy of a personal voice. Auden transformed syllabic verse into one of the great permanent resources of English poetry."

There has been much argument on this point. I remember Louis MacNeice scolding me for claiming that I liked some syllabic verse of Thom Gunn, and saying, with much emphasis, that syllabics were alien to the English tradition and could ruin it. But Auden was now an American, and syllabics certainly became a permanent resource of his. He had many other resources, of course; and it may be that syllabics occasionally caused moments of dullness or triviality, though that could certainly not be said of their use in the Freud elegy or in "The Sea and the Mirror."

MENDELSON'S GREAT admiration for this long poem, and the other extraordinary long poems of the 1940s, is easily understandable. "New Year Letter," though important for the biographer, is perhaps the least of them; it falls into what the poet called "the preacher's loose immodest tone." "For the Time Being" is more remarkable, but the greatest of these works of the '40s is "The Sea and the Mirror," a long poem, or series of poems, of great depth and technical virtuosity. It is subtitled "A Commentary on Shakespeare's *The Tempest*," and is spoken by the characters of the play in turn. Mendelson gives a brilliant and admiring account of this work, which may well be the peak of Auden's achievement.

Fuller calls this work an *ars poetica* (it uses a large variety of verse forms), and he stresses also its autobiographical aspect: Auden was hurt by the infidelities of Chester Kallman, to whom he regarded himself as married, and his pain shows through. Mendelson reveals traces in the poem of Auden's odd belief that he owed his life to a miscarriage suffered by his mother before he was born, so that he could, on occasion, think of himself as a murderer. He sometimes reminded himself that his own good fortune (for instance, in being alive) could be thought of as due to the ill luck of somebody else.

I have no doubt that "The Sea and the Mirror" is one of the great poems of the age. No quotation could suggest the variety and richness of the verse, but here is Prospero saying goodbye to Ariel:

> Now, Ariel, I am that I am, your late and
> lonely master,
> Who knows now what magic is—
> the power to enchant
> That comes from disillusion. What the
> books can teach one
> Is that most desires end up in stinking
> ponds,
> But we have only to learn to sit still and
> give no orders,
> To make you offer us your echo and your
> mirror;
> We have only to believe you, then you
> dare not lie;
> To ask for nothing, and at once from your
> calm eyes,
> With their lucid proof of apprehension
> and disorder,
> All we are not stares back at what we are.

Mendelson says that in this poem Auden "produced emotional splendors with few parallels in modern literature," and this is true, even though the technical virtuosity of the poems, the astonishing prose speech of Caliban, and the presence of much cool irony may at first command the attention of readers and defer the moment when they become fully aware of those splendors.

THE AGE OF ANXIETY, a quite different kind of work though not less complex, followed in 1947, only three years after "The Sea and the Mirror." Later there were more long poems, or long series of poems, notably the sequence "Horae Canonicae" and "The Shield of Achilles." The very late books contain poems that are moving enough, and sometimes still need a lot of explaining, though the poet had long renounced the obscurities of his early verse; but there is nothing more on the grandest scale. Mendelson complains of some "formulaic triviality," and he quotes Auden's description of himself as a comic poet (which he often was), but even Mendelson misses, in the late work, the sense that poems can be "acts of sacred awe." Once again we hear the sad story of the poet's last days, his withdrawal, his dreadful loneliness in Oxford or almost anywhere; the fifty cigarettes a day and the endless martinis, his squibs about death.

> He still loves life
> but O O O O how he wishes
> the Good Lord would take him.

(As Auden told Kallman, to make this a seventeen-syllable haiku you have to count the four Os as three, a permissible move.)

Since Fuller is himself an ingenious and witty poet, we could expect that he would know englyns, cynydds, and tankas, not to speak of accentual Asclepiadeans, sapphics, galliambics, and choriambs, when he saw them. Such ingenuities delight the more traditional kind of poet; they belong to the secrets of a craft, and Auden was in a very strong sense a traditional poet, and always a craftsman, whatever he was doing: plays, libretti, critical essays, anything written. Mendelson is equally aware of the metrical subtleties and all the other evidences of craftsmanship. Neither author is afraid to scold the great man; but both have earned over and over again the right to do that, and are also fully entitled to praise him. Auden thought well of the act of praising. He even wanted to praise "all there is for being." One can certainly praise both these books for being. ■

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NEW YORK DIARIST

Uneasy Rider

I WANT TO TALK ABOUT THE AMADOU Diallo case, in which four New York City cops fired and fired and fired 41 shots at an unarmed West African immigrant, killing him and returning the repressed conflict between Mayor Rudy Giuliani and his black and Latino and left-liberal critics to the surface of public life. They think he is acting like Hitler. He thinks they are working for Hillary. But first things first.

FIRST, I WANT TO KNOW WHY SOME NEW York literati seem to find "quality of life" issues cause for humor and scorn. They must drive everywhere. In pre-Giuliani New York, you had to concentrate, you had to prepare for a ride on the subway. On the train, you sat quietly amidst begging and beseeching, haranguing and harassing. You could see the misery and need in some of the panhandlers' eyes; but, *finally, your mortal vulnerability rose* up and cried "Enough!" to their mortal vulnerability. Then came Giuliani, and the panhandlers and the strain went away. And the rampant crime declined. Because dispelling the wild atmosphere that creates the mood for inflicting hurt is what, among other things, quality of life means. The four cops who inflicted unimaginable hurt on Diallo knew that better than anyone. They worked on a special squad designed to improve quality of life in New York's most tortured neighborhoods.

NOW, IN THE WAKE OF THE DIALLO SHOOTing and the backlash against the New York City Police, the panhandlers have returned to the trains. I don't doubt that either the mayor or his police department has decided to remind straphangers of what life was like before Giuliani took the helm. It may be a manipulative tactic, but at least you can't criticize Giuliani for laying down the law instead of practicing politics. Since the city residents who most often use the subway are poor African Americans and poor immigrants, since they are the working poor and the lower middle class, they had to wait a long time for someone to respond to their needs.

LET THE KNOWING MOCK, BUT SUCH quality-of-life issues flow out of the heart of a contemporary political question, which is also a modern dilemma. It is called: Whither freedom? In America, freedom is more plentiful and more protean and more paradoxical than anywhere else, and so the American version of the question is bigger and more volatile. The matter has degrees, of course. A sustained government initiative in response to outrage over traffic congestion seems downright laughable. It is laughable. But it is also a sign and a symptom. It means that, for more and more people, there are public moments in which they feel unbearably reduced, in which they feel that life has become a plague upon life. That may not always be a human feeling worth attending to—it is on the subway; it is not on the highway. But it is a politically consequential feeling.

FOR EXAMPLE, IN NEW YORK, A BATTLE has been roiling between dog owners who let their hounds run without a leash and people who feel menaced as a result. Neither will budge an inch for the other, and Giuliani has decided to fine the former. The merest mention of the issue incites sophisticated snickers. I don't understand the reaction. The whole doggy dilemma is about freedom vs. responsibility, about right vs. right, about the distinctions between rights, entitlements, and privileges. It is also about where the American psyche is now, and anyone who ignores *the phases, and the consequences*, of democratic psychology is intellectually jaded to the point of political naïveté. That brings me to the police.

IN AMERICA, WE WANT TO BE FREE TO DO what we want. We also want to keep other people from doing what we don't want, which poses a problem. As our freedom expands, so does other people's. Our democracy is like a fairy tale, or like Balzac's magical wild ass's skin: our desire for more freedom is a wish that, once granted, curbs the extent of our freedom. For this quandary, popular culture supplies a humble catharsis. What figure can do what he or she wants and keep other people from doing what he or she does not want? Why, the cop, naturally. Just as the mad, hot Greeks worshiped rationality in their art and philosophy—they exalted the golden mean because they felt tarnished by their furies of meanness—we wild individualists construct our counterpart in our popular mythology. We are nuts about law enforcement. To be an American is to be a policeman.

DON'T ROLL YOUR EYES. IT IS TO BE A policeman in the special sense fabricated by popular culture. In that version, the cop is always at odds with his (or her) superiors. The cop is both outside the official law and a fighter on behalf of the actual law, which is being violated by miscreant officials. He fights for the moral law within, if you will. And this inner law is also tied to the cop's own identity and destiny. So he is fighting both for a particular and a universal; he is recreating himself in relation to others while inventing his own conformity to society's rules. He is a cop with the imagination to see past his narrow interests and beyond his literal duty. The fulfillment of his particular will produces a general beneficence. It is a good American aspiration.

BUT SOMETHING HAS CHANGED. CONSIDER the agon between profligate dog owner and petulant dog victim. It is a new wrinkle in democratic psychology, an encounter between people who act like cops, but cops without imagination. Each feels unbearably reduced. Each enforces himself as if he were the law. And what if this kind of standoff became widespread? You could forget about the general beneficence. There would be only one fixed, maniacally stubborn will set against another.

IN SUCH A SOCIETY, WHERE EVERYONE was a cop without imagination, only a bigger and stronger and more iron cop would be able to settle disputes. In such a society, people would fire and fire and fire their freedom until their wills were empty. Real cops would respond by acting like ordinary people acting like cops and fire and fire and fire until their guns were empty. Ordinary people acting like cops would deny reason its rights and equate real and decent cops with the SS. No one would speak or see or hear beyond his bodily precinct. In such a society, transparently symbolic quality-of-life issues would become the highest official priority because everything would be at stake for someone somewhere at every instant. In such a society, trivial grievances would amount to matters of life and death, yet the very phrase "quality of life," even when it referred to nontrivial matters, would incite sophisticated snickers.

THAT'S RIGHT, I THINK POOR AMADOU Diallo died tragically at the hands of our paradoxes. But this is a young country, and we will keep finding our way. Let vigilance and lucidity, insight and sympathy guide us. And now I had better go. A train is coming into the station. It is time to concentrate; it is time to prepare.

LEE SIEGEL

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